

**Exploring Grade six teachers' views regarding teaching progressed learners in  
Lichtenburg selected primary schools**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

Title of Dissertation: "Exploring Grade six teachers' views regarding teaching progressed learners in Lichtenburg selected primary schools."

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I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. M. J.', written over a horizontal line.

Signature

20 February 2020

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## **ABSTRACT**

According to the National Policy for Assessment Grade R-12, South African learners are either promoted or progressed to the next grade. This study focused on teachers' views on teaching progressed learners in primary schools in the Lichtenburg District. According to the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Progression Requirements, the term 'progressed' means the movement of a learner from one grade to the next grade excluding grade R, in spite of the learner's non-compliance with all the promotion requirements. The theoretical framework was provided by the behaviourist, social constructivist, and interactive learning theories. A literature study investigated the accommodation of progressed learners in Zimbabwe and the United States, albeit the use of different terminology to identify the learners, and reasons for the increase in progressed learners in South African schools since the inception of the new curriculum policy and the progression policies. Against this background, a qualitative study was conducted and a purposeful sample of six primary school teachers teaching English First Additional Language to grade six progressed learners at two selected primary schools in the Lichtenburg district was selected. Data were gathered by interviews, observation and document analysis. Findings indicated that teachers were constrained by overcrowded classrooms, lack of teaching resources and school infrastructure, poor learner behaviour, poor attendance of remediation sessions and lack of parent involvement. Teachers were not trained to teach progressed learners and tended towards teacher-centered approaches. Based on the literature and the findings of the qualitative inquiry recommendations for improved practice were made.

**Keywords:** Progressed learners, Lichtenburg District, primary schools, qualitative study, interviews

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1	Introduction .....	1
1.2	Background .....	2
1.3	Significance of study .....	5
1.4	Conceptual Framework .....	5
1.5	Problem Statement .....	7
1.6	Research Question .....	8
1.7	Aims and Objectives of study .....	9
1.7.1	Aims of study .....	9
1.7.2	Research objectives .....	9
1.8	Research methods .....	10
1.8.1	Research paradigm .....	10
1.8.2	Research design .....	10
1.8.3	Selection of research sites and sampling .....	10
1.8.4	Data collection and analysis .....	11
1.9	Ethical considerations .....	11
1.10	Delimitations and limitations of research study .....	11
1.11	Conclusion .....	12

### CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

2.1	Introduction .....	13
2.2	Behaviourist learning theory .....	13
2.2.1	Characteristics of behaviourist learning theory .....	13
2.2.2	Advantages of behaviourist learning theory .....	16
2.3	Social constructivist learning theory .....	18
2.3.1	Characteristics of social constructivist learning theory .....	18
2.3.2	Advantages of social constructivist learning theory .....	20

<b>2.4</b>	<b>Interactive learning theory .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2.4.1</b>	<b>Characteristics of interactive learning theory .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2.4.2</b>	<b>Advantages of interactive learning theory.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>25</b>

## **CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW**

<b>3.1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>What are progressed learners? .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>3.2.1</b>	<b>Progressed learners in South Africa .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3.2.2</b>	<b>Progressed learners in Zimbabwe.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3.2.3</b>	<b>Progressed learners in the United States of America .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Teaching progressed learners.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>3.3.1</b>	<b>Different teaching methods and approaches .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>3.3.2</b>	<b>Relevant teaching methods and approaches for progressed learners .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Challenges regarding teaching progressed learners .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>3.4.1</b>	<b>Teaching resources towards progressed learners .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>3.4.2</b>	<b>Teachers' pedagogical knowledge to enhance the teaching of progressed learners .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>3.4.3</b>	<b>Teachers' attitudes towards teaching progressed learners.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>3.4.4</b>	<b>Systemic challenges.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>3.4.5</b>	<b>Learners' attitudes towards learning .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>3.4.6</b>	<b>Maximising retention and minimising dropouts .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>3.5</b>	<b>What teaching strategies could have been used to improve teacher proficiency regarding teaching progressed learners in primary Schools.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>3.5.1</b>	<b>Repetition of learning content .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>3.5.2</b>	<b>Indirect instruction .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>3.5.3</b>	<b>Interactive instruction.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>3.5.4</b>	<b>Differentiated instruction .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>3.6</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>41</b>

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1	Introduction .....	43
4.2	The research design .....	43
4.2.1	Research designs .....	43
4.2.2	Different research designs .....	43
4.3	Research paradigm.....	44
4.4	Research approach.....	45
4.5	Population Sampling .....	48
4.5.1	Sampling methods.....	49
4.6	Data collection .....	51
4.6.1	Interviews .....	51
4.6.2	Focus groups .....	52
4.6.3	Documents .....	53
4.6.4	Observation .....	53
4.6.5	Non-participatory observation .....	54
4.6.6	Document analysis .....	55
4.7	Data analysis .....	56
4.7.1	Trustworthiness in data collection and analysis .....	57
4.7.2	Credibility .....	58
4.7.3	Triangulation .....	58
4.7.4	Transferability .....	58
4.8	Ethical clearance and permission .....	59
4.9	Conclusion .....	59

## CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

5.1	Introduction .....	60
5.2	Participant information.....	60
5.3	Profiles of participants .....	62
5.3.1	Participant #1 .....	63

5.3.1.1 Biography .....	63
5.3.1.2 Teaching approaches .....	63
5.3.1.3 Theories .....	64
5.3.1.4 Challenges.....	64
5.3.1.5 Teaching strategies .....	65
5.3.1.6 Assessment.....	65
5.3.2 Participant #2 .....	66
5.3.2.1 Biography .....	66
5.3.2.2 Teaching Approaches.....	66
5.3.2.3 Theories .....	67
5.3.2.4 Challenges.....	67
5.3.2.5 Teaching Strategies .....	68
5.3.2.6 Assessment.....	68
5.3.3 Participant #3 .....	69
5.3.3.1 Biography .....	69
5.3.3.2 Teaching approaches .....	70
5.3.3.3 Theories .....	70
5.3.3.4 Challenges.....	71
5.3.3.5 Teaching strategies .....	72
5.3.3.6 Assessment.....	73
5.3.4 Participant #4 .....	73
5.3.4.1 Biography .....	73
5.3.4.2 Teaching approaches .....	74
5.3.4.3 Theories .....	74
5.3.4.4 Challenges.....	75
5.3.4.5 Teaching strategies .....	75
5.3.4.6 Assessment.....	76
5.3.5 Participant #5 .....	77
5.3.5.1 Biography .....	77
5.3.5.2 Teaching approaches .....	77
5.3.5.3 Theories .....	78



5.3.5.4 Challenges.....	79
5.3.5.5 Teaching strategies .....	79
5.3.5.6 Assessment.....	80
5.3.6 Participant #6 .....	81
5.3.6.1 Biography .....	81
5.3.6.2 Teaching approaches .....	82
5.3.6.3 Theories .....	82
5.3.6.4 Challenges.....	83
5.3.6.5 Teaching strategies .....	83
5.3.6.6 Assessment.....	84
5.4 Non-participatory observation .....	85
5.4.1 Participant #1 .....	86
5.4.1.1 Teaching approaches .....	86
5.4.1.2 Theories .....	86
5.4.1.3 Challenges.....	87
5.4.1.4 Teaching strategies .....	87
5.4.1.5 Assessment.....	87
5.4.2 Participant #2 .....	88
5.4.2.1 Teaching approaches .....	88
5.4.2.2 Theories .....	88
5.4.2.3 Challenges.....	89
5.4.2.4 Teaching strategies .....	89
5.4.2.5 Assessment.....	89
5.4.3 Participant #3 .....	90
5.4.3.1 Teaching approaches .....	90
5.4.3.2 Theories .....	90
5.4.3.3 Challenges.....	91
5.4.3.4 Teaching strategies .....	91
5.4.3.5 Assessment.....	91
5.4.4 Participant #4 .....	92
5.4.4.1 Teaching approaches .....	92

5.4.4.2 Theories .....	92
5.4.4.3 Challenges.....	93
5.4.4.4 Teaching strategies .....	93
5.4.4.5 Assessment.....	93
5.4.5 Participant #5 .....	94
5.4.5.1 Teaching approaches .....	94
5.4.5.2 Theories .....	94
5.4.5.3 Challenges.....	94
5.4.5.4 Teaching strategies .....	95
5.4.5.5 Assessment.....	95
5.4.5 Participant #6 .....	96
5.4.6.1 Teaching approaches .....	96
5.4.6.2 Theories .....	96
5.4.6.3 Challenges.....	96
5.4.6.4 Teaching strategies .....	97
5.4.6.5 Assessment.....	97
5.5 Document analysis .....	97
5.5.1 Participant #1 .....	98
5.5.1.1 Policy documents .....	98
5.5.1.2 Lesson plans .....	99
5.5.1.3 Assessment.....	99
5.5.1.4 Teaching strategies .....	99
5.5.2 Participant #2 .....	100
5.5.2.1 Policy documents .....	100
5.5.2.2 Lesson plans .....	100
5.5.2.3 Assessment.....	100
5.5.2.4 Teaching strategies .....	101
5.5.3 Participant #3 .....	101
5.5.3.1 Policy documents .....	101
5.5.3.2 Lesson plans .....	102
5.5.3.3 Assessment.....	102

5.5.3.4 Teaching strategies .....	102
5.5.4 Participant #4 .....	103
5.5.4.1 Policy documents .....	103
5.5.4.2 Lesson plans .....	103
5.5.4.3 Assessment.....	103
5.5.4.4 Teaching strategies .....	104
5.5.5 Participant #5 .....	104
5.5.5.1 Policy documents .....	104
5.5.5.2 Lesson plans .....	104
5.5.5.3 Assessment.....	105
5.5.5.4 Teaching strategies .....	105
5.5.6 Participant #6 .....	105
5.5.6.1 Policy documents .....	105
5.5.6.2 Lesson plans .....	106
5.5.6.3 Assessment.....	106
5.5.6.4 Teaching strategies .....	107
5.6 Conclusion .....	107

## CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1 Introduction .....	108
6.2 Summary and discussion of literature review .....	108
6.3 Summary and discussion of empirical study .....	110
6.3.1 Summary and discussion of participants .....	111
6.3.2 Summary and discussion of teaching approaches .....	112
6.3.3 Summary and discussion of challenges.....	114
6.3.3.1 Overcrowding in classes.....	115
6.3.3.2 Shortage of resources .....	116
6.3.3.3 Summary and Discussion of external factors .....	118
6.3.4 Summary and discussion of teaching strategies.....	118

6.3.5 Summary and discussion of assessment.....119

6.4 Synthesis of findings.....121

6.5 Recommendations.....122

6.6 Research conclusion.....123

References .....125

List of appendices

Appendix A: Semi-structured questionnaire.....131

Appendix B: Classroom observation schedule .....136

Appendix C: Document analysis .....139

Appendix D: Ethical clearance .....142

Appendix E: Permission to conduct research .....143

### **List of abbreviations**

ACE	Accredited Certificate in Education
ANA	Annual National Assessment
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CS	Code-Switching
DBE	Department of Basic Education
E-FAL	E-FAL
IL	Inquiry Learning
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management Systems
NCLBA	No Child Left Behind Act
NPA	National Protocol for Assessment
NPRRR	National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Progression Requirements.
PBL	Problem-Based Learning
PGCE	Post-Graduate Certificate in Education
PPM	Post-Provisioning Model
PSF	Professional Support Forum
QLTC	Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign
SASAMS	South African School Administration and Management System
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SES	Subject Education Specialist
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support.
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In South Africa and other parts of the world, learner performance is a serious concern. In South Africa, irrespective of the changing of curriculum policies since 1994, learner performance from lower grades to high grades has not improved DBE, 2001. A large body of literature covering a wide range of policy and research on learner performance and teaching and learning is available. According to the National Policy for Assessment, 2011 (NPA) Grade R-12, South African learners are either promoted or progressed to the next grade. According to the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Progression Requirements (NPPPR), the term 'progressed' means the movement of a learner from one grade to the next grade excluding grade R, in spite of the learner's non-compliance with all the promotion requirements NPPPR, 2011. The progression of learners in South Africa was introduced to prevent a learner from being retained in a phase for a period exceeding four years. This study discussed progressed learners with special reference to National Protocol for Assessment, 2011 and the NPPPR, 2011 as cornerstones for learner progression in order to make recommendations to improve teacher proficiency in teaching and learning.

In the view of the researcher as an experienced primary school teacher, the progression of learners has mostly been influenced by the availability of resources, learner-teacher ratio in class, teaching methods and the preparedness of the teachers for teaching and learning. This view was also supported by Brodie, 2004 who indicates that socio-economic status, parents, and peer influence, learners' abilities, the poor learning environment contribute towards the progression of learners. It was on this basis that the researcher intended to explore the views of the teachers in grade six regarding the teaching of progressed learners and also to develop strategies to empower them on their proficiency regarding teaching progressed learners.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

In South Africa and other parts of the world teaching and learning takes place under norms and prescripts of the country but learners continue to show variation in performance as they differ in cognitive levels DBE, 2011. In South Africa, some learners perform optimally; others experience challenges in learning. The latter is from time to time moved from one to grade to another with the intent to reduce the number of learners who are retained in the same grade or phase more than once. These are called progressed learners in the South African system.

Progressed learners are learners who did not pass their previous grade but were moved to the next grade as per the progression policy or the NPPPR, 2011. This study focused on the intermediate phase, in particular, grade six classes. NPA (2011) clearly states how a learner in the grade R – 12 is to be promoted: a learner in the intermediate phase has to meet the following requirements in order to progress to the next grade: Home Language level 4, First Additional Language level 3, Mathematics level 3 plus any other two levels 3 in any two remaining subjects. The stipulation above is also found in the Government Gazette 36041, 2012 which stipulates the pass requirements to be met by every learner according to the CAPS policy of South Africa. The major cause of the progression of South African learners in large numbers is unknown and this motivated this present study.

A comparison can be made to learners in the slow learner trap in the United States (US). Learners in the slow learner trap are referred to as students with borderline intellectual functioning Shaw, 2010. These learners show low intelligence and academic performance but do not qualify for special education for either cognitive or learning disabilities Shaw, 2010. The No Child Left behind Act (NCLBA), 2001 in the US covered all learners from all states and its major intention was to ensure the availability of resources and support to all learners referred to as slow learners NCLB, 2001. Zimbabwe, on the other hand, has classified her learners in the low stream class and the mainstream class Mapolisa, 2014. Underperforming learners in Zimbabwe are classified as learners in the low stream (similar to progressed learners in South Africa). Most of these learners in Zimbabwe have

benefitted by the introduction of the 'O' level Curriculum which has since progressed most learners from the Primary School Leaving Examination to Form One. The results of this progression of low stream learners have negatively affected the quality of the results of Form One learners in previous years, Mafa and Tarusikirwa, 2013. Comparatively speaking learners from the three backgrounds mentioned above manifest similarities in underperformance although caused by different factors.

Various reasons and factors contribute to the increase in progressed learners' numbers such as the lack of parental recognition and involvement, SIAS, 2014. When parents are not involved in their children's learning process, they are unaware of the challenges affecting their children. Thus, learners with this background fail because of factors like absenteeism and bunking of classes which contributes to over-age learners in a particular grade, thus leading to the age cohort principle (i.e., learners who are older than the grade by two or more years). The increase in progressed learners is also caused by the illiteracy of their parents or those they reside at home. To this effect, it is a challenge to assist these learners with homework, personal studies and practice of the subject like mathematics. Eventually, these learners are progressed not because they satisfy the necessary requirements, but because the progression policy dictates that they must be progressed.

Inclusive to the challenges of the progressed learners above are the socio-economic factors such as learners from child-headed families where assistance with academic issues is minimal SIAS, 2014. A study dealing with low socio-economic status background indicated that children from an impoverished background are likely to exhibit higher levels of problematic behaviour, difficulties with their studies and negative attitudes to school Considine and Zappala, 2002. The researcher in this study wanted to explore what teachers thought about the learners from this background and the attitudes of the progressed learners towards teaching and learning.

Another challenge that has brought a rise in the number of progressed learners in Lichtenburg District schools is the lack of resources. Learners learn more effectively when resources are available in school; without resources, progressed learners suffer even



more. Mandina's 2012, the study indicates that challenges in rural schools in Zimbabwe are the lack of basic infrastructure for teaching and learning, a problem of keeping and attracting specialists and qualified teachers in these schools, poor funding and limited resources. All these aspects are the basics of proper curriculum provisioning to both gifted and progressed learners. In South Africa, this situation led to the introduction of the Post Provisioning Model (PPM) of the Department of Education. PPM was a model used by the DBE to allocate very few teachers to rural schools thus giving teachers abnormal workloads which eventually left the progressed learners without the necessary attention they deserved Sephton, 2017. The researcher intended further to explore the teachers' views towards the progressed learners during teaching and learning and what teachers said with regard to the barrier that led to the increased progressed learners in the education system of South Africa. The researcher also wished to explore the progressed learners' attitudes towards their school-work, for example, homework, projects, and corrections whether these were done on time and per teachers' instruction.

The researcher also believed that the problem of lack of availability and use of teaching aids in the schools around this district escalated the challenge of progressed learners. The aspect of lack of availability of resources in Lichtenburg schools was explored and the efficient use of budgets in resourcing teachers with relevant teaching aids and other equipment. This study explored to what extent teachers used these resources to minimise the problem of increasing progressed learners in schools. On the other hand, the researcher explored how teaching strategies and approaches impeded the success of teachers in reducing the number of progressed learners in our schools. It was also the intention of the researcher to explore how teacher training and proficiency contributed to the increase of the progressed learners in South Africa. Teachers' views about teaching the progressed learners were also explored. The researcher had further explored how teachers planned for progressed learners affected by the challenges stated above and the contribution of the School Based-Support Team towards supporting these learners and their teachers.

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The rationale for the study was prompted by an increasing number of progressed learners in Lichtenburg schools especially grade 6 since the inception of CAPS and sought to identify causes of this increase of progressed learners in the previous years. Through this study, the researcher envisaged determining if progressed learners would pass if correct approaches were applied in teaching them and if they have a positive attitude towards their learning. This study also intended to outline how other countries deal with cases like these, to identify areas for improvement to ensure that progressed learners pass in future on their own and to see a reduction in the number of progressed learners in South African schools in particular Lichtenburg with the collective effort of all stakeholders in education. Another benefit of this research study would be to reveal the teachers' views on teaching progressed learners on a daily basis. The study further envisaged showing both the progressed learners and their parents that with the correct attitude it was possible for the former to pass with appropriate help from teachers. Another significant value is to promote the necessary help and varied individualised teaching approaches that would best assist progressed learners through the differentiated curriculum SIAS, 2014 and thus reduce the number of progressed learners in schools around Lichtenburg in particular. The importance of acquiring relevant information regarding this study, would inform the Department of Basic Education on implementing appropriate professional development for teaching progressed learners in primary schools. Collected data could also inform further research needs as far as teaching grade six progressed learners in primary schools was concerned.

### **1.4 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Leaf Group, 2018, outlined the conceptual framework as the tool that is used to guide the research project of the direction the researcher would like to take. The researcher has therefore opted to adopt to use the conceptual framework in this study so that he may plan the methodologies, the research question and to assess how well the study will achieve the intended goal. The conceptual framework was used by the researcher as a guide of how the research study was initially planned. it was important for this research study to

have a conceptual framework because through proper planning the researcher was then able to gather proper and relevant information that was vital for this research study. Through the use of the conceptual framework, the researcher was then able to plan this research study as qualitative research and employed relevant research methodologies, sampling techniques, and research designs.

Various theories support teaching and learning in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), such as behaviourism, social constructivism, and interactive theory. Although these theories have different teaching approaches, they also complement each other. Different assumptions bring a distinction among these theories, however at some point they interlinked. Maree, 2007 states that learning is an acquisition of behaviour based on environmental conditions and understanding of human behaviour in terms of cause and effect. In this study, the researcher intended to explore teacher behaviour towards progressed learners. Zhou and Brown, 2015 indicate that the interactive theory of cognitive development leads to learner-centeredness and a co-constructivist basis of learning, in which learner's potential within the social context is accommodated. This implies that learners are actively involved in the learning process and teachers provide learning opportunities through peer tutoring which would afford the progressed learners to interact with others. The researcher also aimed to explore the relevance of the interactive learning theory with regard to the relationship between teachers and progressed learners and progressed learners and their peers in the classroom.

This study was underpinned by the social constructivist theory since it promotes a learner-centered approach which gives each learner an opportunity to learn at his or her own pace. The theory allows the learner to put his/her knowledge into practice. In the view of the researcher, the teacher should give progressed learners the opportunity to learn at their own pace with the intention to meet the promotional requirements.

## **1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Although the Department of Basic Education introduced policies like Inclusive Education White Paper 6, 2006 Screening Identification Assessment and Support (SIAS), 2014, School-Based Support Team (SBST) and Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC), the issue of progressed learners continues to be on the weekly agenda of departmental meetings of both educators and senior departmental officials. The Generic Key Findings that learners lack a thorough understanding of basic concepts and teacher proficiency remains a concern; this leads to teaching with a lack of practical exposure and application to everyday life DBE Analytical Report, 2016. This retards the reduction of numbers of progressed learners in our area and the country at large. Progressed learners encounter challenges in comprehension and acquisition of the learning content and require expanded opportunities and effective remediation to learn more effectively.

Despite that teachers have undergone training, the increase of the progressed learners in primary schools in the vicinity of the Lichtenburg District continues. Teachers require state assistance to establish high standards, to develop aligned assessment and to build accountability systems in districts and in primary schools, NCLB Act, 2011. The Department of Basic Education introduced the Post Provisioning Model to distribute teachers across South African schools, but the formula for determining the number of teachers required by each school had always been inconsistent Sephton, 2017 thus leading to an increase of progressed learners. In spite of the Quality Teaching and Learning Campaign (QTLC) introduced in South African schools, learners continued to progress with the help of the progression policy despite the involvement of parents in the open days held in our schools. The Department of Basic Education has continued to distribute the resources in the schools in Lichtenburg schools, but we still observe the continuous rise of progressed learners in our area and the North-West province at large. Despite the effort made by DBE in promoting quality teaching and learning in South African schools which are critically important for ensuring wide access to quality education and life-long learning UNESCO, 2002, and although all unions and teachers had adopted inclusive policies, very little had been achieved with regard to teaching progressed learners in Lichtenburg District schools.

Although resources had been distributed across the schools in the district, including the establishment of QLTC structures which ensured parental recognition and involvement SIAS, 2014, the number of progressed learners in the area still rises. Despite learners given extra classes, learner performance is not desirable with high numbers of progressed learners in classes, especially in primary schools, in grade six in particular. This notion had been confirmed by the reports of grade six Annual National Assessment Diagnostic Report (ANA), 2014 and analysis results in DBE Diagnostic Report, 2016 respectively.

The researcher acknowledges that lack of teaching strategies like the process and learner-centered approaches is evident and should be employed while teaching learners from this background, who have progressed learner status. Feedback to learners also needs to be given on time and with insight as a strategy of teaching with expanded opportunities afforded to progressed learners. This study intended to explore the extent to which teachers in the Lichtenburg District used inclusive strategies to accommodate rote-learning in teaching the progressed learners and which strategies were used to enhance teacher proficiency in teaching progressed learners.

## **1.6 THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

Against this background the research question was formulated as follows:

To what extent did teachers in grade six in Lichtenburg District, South Africa make use of different teaching approaches to teach progressed learners and what strategies were suggested to enhance their proficiency regarding the teaching of progressed learners?

**The following sub-questions were posed to explore the main research question further.**

- What does the scholarly literature suggest about teaching progressed learners?
- What specific theories foreground teaching progressed learners?
- What are the challenges regarding teaching progressed learners?
- What teaching strategies could be implemented to improve teacher proficiency regarding the teaching of progressed learners in primary schools?

## **1.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY**

### **1.7.1 Aim of the study**

This study aimed to explore to what extent primary teachers in grade six in Lichtenburg in South Africa made use of different teaching approaches and strategies that could be suggested to enhance their proficiency regarding the teaching of progressed learners. To explore what teachers are saying regarding teaching progressed learners in grade six.

This study intended to explore the challenges experienced by teachers in grade six in Lichtenburg, in South Africa. It aimed to determine what teachers believed were the factors that impeded the teaching of progressed learners in primary schools.

### **1.7.2 Research objectives**

The main objectives of this study were:

To explore scholarly literature about teaching progressed learners and to ascertain theories that foreground the teaching and learning of progressed learners in primary schools;

To explore the views of primary school teachers regarding teaching progressed learners in primary schools;

- To find out whether primary teachers in the Lichtenburg area have been empowered to teach progressed learners;
- To identify the challenges regarding teaching progressed learners in primary schools;
- To suggest strategies that could improve teachers' proficiency regarding teaching progressed learners in primary schools.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHOD**

### **1.8.1 Research paradigm**

Positivism, interpretivism, feminism, postmodern and critical science paradigms are some of the paradigms that could be used when conducting research Carson, Gilmore, Perry and Gronhaug, 2001. This study employed the interpretive paradigm research since it allowed the researcher to explore the views of teachers regarding progressed learners in primary schools and to probe the behaviour of teachers towards progressed learners.

### **1.8.2 Research design**

There are various types of research designs: Quantitative research designs, qualitative designs, and mixed research designs. According to MacMillan and Schumacher, 2010, quantitative research designs emphasise objectivity in measuring and describing phenomena. This case study employed a qualitative research design. Creswell, 2007 indicated that qualitative research is the type of educational research that relies on the participant's vision, gathers data consisting of words from the participants, expresses and considers these words for themes. This study sought to explore the views of teachers regarding teaching progressed learners, the proficiency level of teachers to teach progressed learners, and the strategies that were employed to improve the teaching of progressed learners in primary schools.

### **1.8.3 Selection of research sites and sampling**

Purposive sampling approach was employed in this study to select suitable information-rich participants from the total population of primary school teachers in Lichtenburg Vos, 2011. MacMillan and Schumacher, 2001 indicate that purposive sampling is used to select a group or individuals whereby rich data are collected. Data were collected at two primary schools in Lichtenburg. The researcher is a teacher in the Lichtenburg area where the research study was conducted. He chose to conduct the study in this area because of its

proximity to his place of work; it was easy to access and not costly. A total of six (n=6) teachers teaching progressed learners in grade six per primary school were selected, that is, three teachers per school.

#### **1.8.4 Data collection and analysis**

Data collection is the process of collecting information required by the researcher to solve the research problem Rouse, 2017. In this study, the researcher made use of semi-structured interviews, observation checklist and document analysis to explore grade six teachers' views regarding teaching progressed learners in Lichtenburg primary schools. Qualitative procedures were used to analyse data.

### **1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Before the researcher conducted this research, he requested ethical clearance from the University of South Africa and consent from the provincial Department of Education in written form and certified with an official stamp. The researcher also ensured that all his participants in this study were educators teaching progressed learners in primary schools. Since the research topic concerned both parents and learners, the researcher ensured confidentiality of data gathered from the participants by non-disclosure of their names or names of schools. No one was discriminated against and the researcher explained to those interested that only a certain number of people were required as participants; however, those who wanted to pursue this study could hold discussions in the interest of the school and the department, not the research study.

### **1.10 DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY**

The researcher took into consideration the characteristics that limited the scope and defined the boundaries of this study. Possible limitations included the willingness of teachers to participate in the study, some teachers might not disclose truthful information



regarding progressed learners in their schools and some may entertain doubts regarding the outcome of the research, that is, improving teaching and learning of progressed learners Simon, 2011.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the researcher provided the basis of why he intended to conduct a study about the teachers' views regarding teaching E-FAL to progressed learners in grade six in Lichtenburg selected primary schools. In the same chapter i.e. chapter one, the researcher ensured that the following concepts were briefly discussed, the conceptual framework, the background of the research study, the problem statement, the research questions, aims and objectives, significance of the study, research methods, research designs, population sampling, data collection methods, ethical considerations, and the researcher finally tabled the delimitations and limitations of this research study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the focus is predominantly on learning theories, such as behaviourist learning theory, constructivism, and the interactive learning theory. These theories were chosen by the researcher to guide the study to explore the behaviour of the progressed learners to their schoolwork and in all respect. The benefits of a learner-centered approach through social constructivism were also explored and how interactive learning may assist progressed learners to improve from progression according to policy to meet the necessary requirements in grade six.

These theories and conceptual frameworks were discussed to address the following sub-questions: What does scholarly literature suggest about teaching progressed learners? What are specific theories foregrounding the teaching of progressed learners? What are the challenges regarding teaching the progressed learners? What strategies can be used to improve teacher proficiency regarding the teaching of progressed learners in primary schools? This chapter further explored the advantages, the characteristics and the benefits gained from applying the three theories according to prior scholarship.

#### **2.2 BEHAVIOURIST LEARNING THEORY**

##### **2.2.1 Characteristics**

Behaviourist Learning Theory is a learning theory that deals with human behaviour impacted by particular circumstances, in this case, the progressed learners in relation to their learning process. The researcher also explored teachers' views of the teaching of progressed learners in E-FAL. How people behave determines their success. Teaching and learning is a process that depends on the behaviour of both parties (i.e., the teacher and the learners) for it to be successful. The behaviour of learners during teaching and

learning plays a vital role in making this process a success or delaying its success. Maree (2007) concurs that according to behaviourism learner behaviour cannot be detached from the environment in which teaching and learning take place.

Teachers should work to enhance the behaviour of the progressed learners and cannot regard their ill behaviour as the responsibility of the parents alone, but rather these learners need to be prepared for the environment of teaching and learning and conditioned in a manner suitable for this process. Screening Identification Assessment and Support (SIAS), 2014 also confirms that one of the principles of assessment is that teachers, parents, and learners should be centrally involved in the learning, teaching and assessment process. However, teachers can benefit more in this process when there is cooperation in this regard. The researcher believes that in the teaching and learning environment, there should be no disruptions as teachers work according to the limits set by annual teaching plans. When teachers deal with disruptive learners during teaching, teaching time is lost and most learners suffer the loss of time and content, be it the progressed or the gifted learners. Maree, 2007 concurs that learner conditioning is a pivotal way of achieving the desired outcome.

Conversely, the researcher does not hold that learners should be conditioned either classically or through operant conditioning, but the positive attitudes of the progressed learner can conquer the negative environment and culture in which they function, especially through good moral conduct and the desire to succeed. Well-behaved learners should be free to interact or discuss issues of curriculum, but this should be done in a way that is constructive to their learning and inclusive to all.

Vallori, 2014 agrees that behavioural learning theory should not only focus on classical and operant conditioning; the materials and objects useful to teaching and learning also play a vital role in ways in which learners learn. This implies that teachers should have classrooms equipped with objects and materials that support the teaching and learning process. Progressed learners should have a chance to learn through touching and interacting with objects and materials for them to comprehend more effectively.

This is further emphasised by McInerney when differing with B.F Skinner for using bundles of operants shaped by the reinforcement to define the best way behaviourism could work. McInerney, 2005 posits that behavioural emphasis should display teaching as a process of transmitting external knowledge to learners through demonstration, reinforcement and controlled sequenced practice. His argument is that reinforcement and punishment predominate as if the learners cannot think until they are reinforced or punished. The behaviour of the progressed learners should be shaped in such a manner that they understand the benefits of completing their work and keeping attentive without punishment. Behaviourist learning theory to the researcher plays a prominent role in determining whether the objectives of the teaching and learning process are achieved. This is evident by the conduct and manners learners display during teaching and learning. In an environment where behaviour of learners is not properly controlled and regulated, the results are undesirable, and here McInerney emphasises that teachers should have shape learner behaviour either through reinforcement or punishment where there is a need.

The researcher believes that during teaching, progressed learners do not always disrupt the classroom, therefore teachers should be alert and consistent in how they apply reinforcement as the progressed learners have to pay attention more than anyone else to assist the teacher's diagnosis. Slavin, 2000 points out, with reference to Skinner's principle of reinforcement of good behaviour and punishment of negative conduct, that teachers should be consistent in using reinforcement and punishment. Teachers should put corrective measures in place to guide learners to behave during teaching and learning and these measures should be known to all learners in the class.

Slavin, 2000 further argues that when reinforcement is used as a form of motivating learners, the timing of and the reason for reinforcement is very important; the same way applies to punishment. Learners should know that reinforcement is only applied to motivate good behaviour not any other kind of behaviour. Teachers should praise the learners who consistently show good conduct and the desired manners during teaching and provide reasons for the reinforcement so that other learners recognise acceptable behaviour in class. Slavin, 2000 stresses that teacher praise for good behaviour encourages other

learners to follow the desired model. Thus, Slavin's view about behaviourism is useful for teaching of progressed learners.

The researcher concurs especially with McInerney and partly with Slavin. In the researcher's opinion what happened during the era of Skinner and Pavlov was different from today. We can no longer follow animal-based experiments as this is deterministic. Learners then were progressed because of various reasons and teachers had to explore those reasons and address them at the early stages, one of which was bad conduct of disrupting classes during teaching and learning. Progressed learners from various schools around Lichtenburg have been moved to the next grade because of reasons best known to schools and different conditions stipulated by progression policies, but their behaviour remains of primary concern. Mild reinforcement can correct learner behaviour, but this should not replace learners' own initiatives.

Learners may have various learning challenges in class, but they will still respond to precision teaching, direct instruction and contingency programmes like intervention activities from specialist teachers with different approaches. In the researcher's opinion learners should be informed of the behavioural checklist or rubric just like when they write an essay or prepare to read for a formal assessment. They should be prepared and informed of what is expected with regard to their behaviour in class and in general.

### **2.2.2 Advantages of the behaviourist learning theory**

Behaviourist learning theory has advantages if applied correctly, for example, the transmission of knowledge to learners through demonstration, reinforcement and controlled and sequenced practice McInerney, 2005. Classrooms with learners who are well-behaved allow inclusive education to take place with ease and where the progressed learners need attention, teachers are able to assist them with minimal difficulties. This implies that for learners to comprehend what is taught, they need to observe it demonstrated by teachers repeatedly to assure them that they are on the right track. Thus, progressed learners taught through demonstrative teaching understand with ease. Transmission of knowledge to the

progressed learners by other learners can also occur during informal settings, thus achieving objectives of the lesson through peer tutoring outside the classroom.

Omrod, 2000 emphasises this by indicating people's behaviour as largely the result of their experiences, so if progressed learners learn in an environment where learning is demonstrated through extensive teaching of concepts, they might learn and grasp subject matter with ease. Skinner's operant conditioning helps in assisting the progressed learners to repeat the desired behaviour again and again while the negative reinforcement reduces mistakes.

One of the important aspects of the behaviourist learning theory is that it develops the classroom environment that fosters desirable learner behaviour. In this classroom, progressed learners are expected to take part in their learning activities and to complete all tasks given to them by their teachers. This is only possible if progressed learners' behaviour is desirable and properly managed by the teachers on the classroom level. Omrod, 2000 maintains that if learners often struggle to complete the learning activities independently, praise will motivate them to complete their activities. This implies that teachers should take a leading role in shaping the behaviour of progressed learners by appreciating their efforts and discouraging their poor behaviour in the early stages.

The researcher agrees that reinforcers in teaching and learning should be used as a supplement to the teaching and learning process but the desired product should not depend on them solely. Reinforcers alone do not play a pivotal role in stimulating progressed learners' interest in their learning process; both the teacher and the progressed learner's effort should be taken into cognisance. For example, if the teacher awards a reinforcement to a progressed learner in class, it still depends on the attitude and the will of the learner to accept and more effectively the way he/she aspires to yield good results at the end of the learning process. Therefore, in the view of the researcher, even if teachers award reinforces every day, learners always respond differently. Therefore, reinforcers do not detract from the role played by both the progressed learners and teachers in the final success of learning.

## **2.3 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST LEARNING THEORY**

### **2.3.1 Characteristics of social constructivist learning theory**

All learning involves knowledge construction in one form or another, it is, therefore, a constructivist process. The question of what sort of instructional practices are likely to promote such knowledge construction, or learning, is at the core of arguments presented by Kirschner, Sweller and Clark, 2006. Kirschner et al. present two approaches in their exposition of constructivist learning: Inquiry Learning (IL) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL). In IL, learners learn content as well as discipline-specific reasoning skills by collaboratively engaging in investigations. In PBL learners learn content, strategies and self-directed learning skills through collaboratively solving problems, reflecting on their experiences and engaging in self-directed inquiry Kirschner et al. 2006. The two approaches outline how learning of the progressed learners should be designed by teachers according to the constructivist theory of learning. Constructivist learning theories stress the importance of learners being engaged in constructing their own knowledge Mayer, 2004, Palinscar, 1996.

Social constructivism is a learning theory that perceives a learner as an active participant in the process of teaching and learning. In this learning theory, learners like the progressed learners should be allowed to explore their understanding and to reflect on what they have learned. This learning theory is underpinned by the learner-centered paradigm: the learner is the key person in ensuring that learning has taken place. Teachers should ensure that the progressed learners are at the central part of the lesson planning during an E-FAL lesson. English lessons should be learner-centered and inclusive of the progressed learners at all times. During these lessons, learners should experiment, explore and take charge of their learning with the support of the teacher, not vice versa.

This learning theory affords the progressed learners a chance to interact with their peers, digest learning contents and make mistakes. Most importantly, this learning theory according to Powell and Kalina, 2009 entails inquiry teaching methods with learners

creating relevant and meaningful concepts built on existing knowledge. The latter scholars emphasise effective classroom teaching with optimal communication between learners and teachers. The researcher maintains that teachers should motivate the progressed learners to be self-regulated in their learning process for them to be able to move on par with other learners.

On the other hand, Jonassen and Land, 2012 suggest that social constructivism provides an alternative for the transmissive instruction where knowledge is transmitted from the teacher to the learners without being constructed. The latter scholars propose that for the progressed learners to understand and comprehend more effectively, teachers should identify what learners know; progressed learners' prior knowledge should be taken into cognisance at all times. Progressed learners are not to be relegated to the passive recipients of information, they should be challenged cognitively at the same time. A learner-centered approach that came with the social constructivist learning theory, affords the progressed learners the opportunity to communicate and construct the information that was just learned and to relate it to their everyday life in the classroom situation. The two scholars argued that where the learner-centered approach is implemented with communication, effective interaction and learner construction of meaning, learners learn more effectively and more easily. In the view of the researcher, a learner-centered approach to the lesson should be part of lesson planning and teachers should indicate how they intend to accommodate the progressed learners in the lesson.

Learners in the English FAL class should be divided into groups so that they can interact and communicate with others in English. Learners will not construct meaning and knowledge if they are not proficient in English. Li Wang, 2007 outlines social constructivism from the perspective of sociocultural learning theory. Sociocultural learning theory takes a learner-centered approach and rather than viewing them as individuals, it takes into account how learners can be of mutual benefit to each other through social interaction in class. This learning theory takes into account the important roles that social relations, community, peer interaction and culture play in cognition and learning Wang, 2007.



Progressed learners should be encouraged to engage in social interaction with other learners.

According to Wang, 2007, learners learn more effectively when they interact socially with other learners in class through theory and practice. Wang, 2007 also emphasises that learners understand the meaning of a word more effectively when they know how to use it, who used it before and in what physical, social and historical context it was used. In simple terms for progressed learners to understand more effectively, they should be afforded more time to comprehend, understand and practically implement what they have learned.

Among the three groups of scholars above, the researcher prefers Wang's argument that social interaction both inside and outside the classroom allows progressed learners to expand their understanding through learning from their peers. This model promotes peer tutoring, deep learning and making meaning through progressed learners' social interaction. The researcher also agreed that learning, thinking and knowing were the results of the relations among learners performing the same activity and interacting with each other. The learner-centered approach is advocated by the three groups of scholars, and it affords the progressed learners a chance to explore their understanding during the learning process while at the same time teachers were able to diagnose their challenges. Social constructivism encourages learners to be independent and take initiative in their learning. Progressed learners would benefit enormously from the application of this learning theory especially if effective communication and interaction in English was encouraged in class.

### **2.3.2 Advantages of the Social Constructivist Learning Theory**

Numerous advantages of this learning theory can improve the performance of learners; one of which is creating a sense of belonging among learners of different cognitive levels, the gifted and progressed learners. Social constructivism also encourages progressed learners to commune together and share problems especially from the perspective of sociocultural background. It can also assist progressed learners to learn to be independent, to make more effort and to have a desire to achieve more effective results.

Schunk, 2000 mentions that social constructivist learning theory is important as teachers do not have to use the traditional sense of delivering learning content through instruction to a class of learners without them taking a vital role in seeking to be independent. Schunk, 2000 further argues that social constructivism highlights the interaction of learners and the situation in the acquisition and refinement of skills and knowledge. This learning theory encourages all stakeholders (i.e., progressed learners, teachers and parents) to take responsibility for ensuring that the culture of learning becomes the norm of the school. The other benefit of social constructivism is that it promotes deep learning in learners and further affords them a chance to construct meaning and knowledge for themselves.

The importance of social constructivism was also highlighted by the Leaf Group, 2001 as a theory that advocates effective teaching methods whereby learners learn more effectively in a hands-on environment and more effectively relate information learned in the classrooms to their lives. Effective English lessons require materials and teaching or learning aids to encourage the progressed learners to learn through touching these objects or materials. The social constructivism curriculum also accommodates the progressed learners' prior knowledge, encourages teachers to spend more time on the progressed learners' favorite topics and allows teachers to focus on important and relevant information Leaf Group, 2001.

According to the researcher, this implies that teachers should diagnose the progressed learners' learning challenges during teaching, and ensure that they concentrate on remedying their specific individual challenges. Different ways may be used to address the challenges diagnosed during teaching, and the most practical way, in the researcher's opinion, is to re-assess learners in order to identify topics difficult for them, especially the progressed learners. Where possible, measures like intervention by other teachers should also be applied to vary the teaching styles and confirm the accuracy of the initial diagnosis by the subject teacher.

The suggestion by Leaf Group that teaching should be learner-centered, address the specific needs of the progressed learners and that teachers' planning should always be in accordance with these learners' needs is useful. Thus, planning should not be done without taking into cognisance individual progressed learners' needs in the classroom. Teaching should not be regarded as a one size fits all mechanism: all learners should be treated as individuals in a classroom and this should also be applicable even during the delivery of the learning content by the teacher. In a social constructivist classroom, learners often work in groups Leaf Group, 2001. This helps learners to learn social skills, support each other's learning process and value each other's opinions and input, Leaf Group, 2001.

The researcher concurs the Leaf Group's assertion that effective learning and teaching takes place in an environment that promotes interaction among learners. The researcher believes that progressed learners can benefit immensely from this kind of practice, that is, being socially interactive and supporting each other with the learning content. Learners should interact at their own level of maturity which is pivotal to the result gained at the end of the teaching and learning process.

## **2.4 INTERACTIVE LEARNING THEORY**

### **2.4.1 Characteristics of interactive learning theory**

Interactive learning theory is a theory that emphasises the interaction between teachers and learners, learners among themselves and their interaction with the learning content. Progressed learners should be encouraged to interact with their peers, regardless of their levels of understanding so as to make them used to interact with learning content in and outside the school. The researcher also believes that when progressed learners work with others in groups, it instills in them a sense of independence which promotes achievement and will help them to pass the grade on their own.

Most importantly the key person in this regard is the teacher and the role he/she plays in ensuring that the distance between the two parties is limited by allowing this interaction.

Interaction refers to the vital participation of learners during teaching and learning and emphasises that all parties in the teaching and learning process play their role correctly and effectively. The teaching of progressed learners would yield more effective results if they played their role by allowing teachers to assist them during activities that afford them expanded opportunities. Learners should interact with each other during group activities to allow other learners a more effective chance to be appraised of difficulties they may be having. Anderson, 2003 defines interaction as reciprocal events that require two objects and actions. In light of this, the researcher understands that progressed learners would learn more effectively if they participate in the teaching and learning process.

Learners need to constructively influence each other in the learning process so that those who lag behind can be assisted through this interaction. Interaction is one of the prominent ways of getting learners involved with each other and it benefits learners in both social skills and cognitive development. Anderson explains that interaction is when two objects or events influence each other. In this case, we refer to the teacher and the progressed learners, learners among themselves and with the learning content.

When teachers influence and channel the mindset of the progressed learners in the right direction, they will learn more effectively and thus produce more effective results. Anderson also spoke of the three forms of interaction when he detailed the deep learning strategy: these forms of interactions are learner-teacher, learner-learner and learner-content. Interaction during E-FAL would simplify the teacher's diagnosis of how he/she succeeded with the lesson or regressed as far as the progressed learners were concerned. When learners interact with the learning content, teachers can easily diagnose existing gaps and devise measures of addressing these emerging gaps.

The advantage of interactive learning highlights the importance of participative learners. Teachers find it difficult to give an honest assessment and diagnosis of the progressed learners when they are not involved in teaching and learning. When progressed learners are involved in teaching and learning, it assists teachers to identify their challenges. Joahkim and Frederick, 2013 suggest that effective interactive learning yields more

effective results compared to passive learning. Through interaction with the environment, real-life experiences and social interactions, learners construct meaning from what they learn. Teachers should show learners that whatever takes place in the classroom is not in isolation with the outside world, but the two complement each other. According to these scholars, learners are constructors of knowledge using their prior experiences and teachers should establish what learners already know in order to present the lesson to the benefit of the learners. Joahkim and Frederick, 2013 stress that learners should be regarded as the major participants during teaching and learning so that they can value their own experiences, explore their understanding and make meaning from what they have learned. The researcher concurs that no learner is a blank slate, because interaction has been taking place even before they came to school.

Therefore, the researcher argues that learners should be afforded a chance to learn at their own pace and style with the help of their teachers. Teachers in Lichtenburg are able to diagnose the learners under discussion (progressed learners) and the learning that had taken place, but the deficiencies in learning should be addressed. The researcher also believes that with interactive learning theory, learners are not only bound to interact with the teacher, but they can interact with each other and the learning content. According to the researcher, it does not matter how learners are grouped, what is essential in this case is that teachers can identify the challenges and strengths of learners from smaller groups in his/her classroom. For the success of teaching progressed learners, interaction should be emphasised and planned for during teachers' lesson preparation.

#### **2.4.2 Advantages of the interactive learning theory**

Interactive learning theory was underpinned by the learner-centered approach where learners were the central participants of teaching and learning. Learners in this learning theory are not passive but active in their learning process. They interact with their peers and use their life experiences as the baseline of their learning. This learning theory further emphasises that learners interact with their teachers, community and explore their understanding through constructing knowledge independently. Learners are encouraged

to engage in deep learning through creative thinking, communication, and collaboration. When learners learn through their peers, they become open-minded and often reach the expected educational goals or even exceed them at some point.

One other advantage of this learning theory is that it affords the teacher some time to interact with other learners and remediate those who are slow in learning. Interactive learning theory promotes the atmosphere of attention and participation and makes the classroom more fun to all learners. Learners in this theory are grouped in pairs where they can think and learn to work together as a group.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

The interactive learning theory has proven to be the learning theory that builds learners from a young age. It teaches them to live together with peers, work together as a group and take responsibility for their learning. This learning theory accommodates learners from different cognitive backgrounds. The three theories discussed above interact with and complement each other but most important is the assumption of the learner-centered approach. The three theories indicate that successful teaching and learning cannot take place if learner behaviour is not first corrected. The theories above also confirm that with good interaction, learning can be mutually beneficial for learners, both the gifted and progressed learners. Good interaction between teachers and learners, learners among themselves as well as learners with the learning content is of importance in this learning theory

Social constructivism, on the other hand, has been used as the primary learning theory and it is central to both behaviourist and interactive learning theories. However, social constructivism could not succeed on its own without these theories. The most important quality that should be put at the fore is that before teaching and learning can take place, good behaviour of learners should be restored in class. Good behaviour of learners leads to good interaction, saves time for the annual teaching plan and syllabus and also affords enough time for expanded opportunities. In conclusion, for teachers to succeed with the

teaching of progressed learners, the three theories discussed should be intertwined and used to the advantage of all learners especially the progressed learners.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter's major intention was to discover what other scholars were saying about teaching progressed learners, challenges teachers encountered regarding teaching the progressed learners and the strategies of improvement towards teacher proficiency in teaching progressed learners. The researcher examined three countries and compared how each country handled the issue of teaching progressed learners and which policies foreground this process in each of them. Progressed learners are from country to country titled differently, for instance in Zimbabwe they are called learners in the low stream class while in the US they are called learners in the slow learning trap who has borderline intellectual functioning Shaw, 2010. The researcher believed that there was no distinction among these learners except in the terminology chosen.

These learners had low intelligence and academic performance but did not qualify for special education on the grounds of cognitive or learning disabilities Shaw, 2010, and this applied to all the three groups of learners from the sampled countries. Comparatively speaking, learners from three backgrounds showed similarities in underperformance promulgated by different factors. The difference between the three countries was the policy that each of the countries named above used for promotion and progression of learners, especially progressed learners. The focal point of the ensuing discussion is South Africa, Zimbabwe, and the US.

#### **3.2 WHAT ARE PROGRESSED LEARNERS?**

Progressed learners are learners who were moved from to grade because of the progression policy not because they satisfied the necessary requirements of passing the previous grade to be moved to the next grade, Government Gazette 36041, 2012. Various reasons were investigated that qualified learners to be moved as progressed learners.



### **3.2.1 Progressed learners in South Africa**

In South Africa, the term progressed learners is used to describing how these learners are moved from their previous grades. Progressed learners are moved to the next grade because of the progression policies of the country as contained in the Government Gazette 36041 of 2012, NPPPR, 2011 and NPA, 2011 respectively. They are moved not because they satisfy the necessary promotion requirements but in compliance with the progression policies stated above. These policies dictate that certain learners covered by certain criteria should be moved to the next grade even when they did not meet the necessary pass requirements.

- **Criteria towards Progressed Learners in schools (CAPS)**

These policies emphasise that a learner might not be retained in the same grade for two consecutive years or in the same phase for more than four years. Learners who fail a grade and repeat the same grade should be progressed to the next grade even if he/she failed, or if a learner had failed once in a phase should not be retained even if he/she failed in the upcoming grades of the same phase.

- **Guidelines and policies regarding Progressed Learners**

According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), a number of policies guide the progression of learners in South Africa. The NPPPR, 2011 provides the guidelines of pass requirements of learners from grade to grade or phase to phase. In this case, the researcher outlines the pass requirements of grade six learners. A learner in this grade may only pass to the next grade if he/she meets the following requirements: Home Language – level 4; E-FAL - level 3; Mathematics - level 3; plus, any other two-level threes from the three remaining subjects. These guidelines are also emphasized in Government Gazette 36041, 2012. NPA also stipulates that a learner may be promoted if the requirements above are met, however a stipulation in these policies covers the learners who cannot pass the previous grades by meeting the necessary requirements. Among

other guidelines is that the learner's age should be taken into cognisance when the progression of learners is done. If a learner is older than the grade by two or more years, that learners should be progressed to the next grade NPPPR, 2011. Further, if a learner had failed the grade once, he/she could not fail the grade for the second time but rather be promoted to the next based on the reason of the number of years in the grade or alternatively in the phase.

### **3.2.2 Progressed Learners in Zimbabwe**

In Zimbabwe, learners have termed learners in the lower stream. Unlike in South Africa, the system groups learners according to their learning abilities in Zimbabwe and it is called streaming of learners. Mainstreaming of learners in Zimbabwe is an act of grouping learners by ability range, that is, those with high intelligent quotients are grouped in their classroom and those which are perceived to be slow are grouped in their own classroom, (Mapolisa, 2016). Instead of progressing learners to the next grade, the Zimbabwean Department of Education had adopted a method of allocating experienced teachers in teaching learners in the lower stream. According to Mapolisa, 2016 when learners are grouped together in relation to their homogeneous intellect, it arouses their interest in learning and serves as a positive step towards boosting their self-esteem and academic performance. The Zimbabwean Education Department does not allocate classes of learners in lower streams to temporary teachers to teach.

On the other hand, Moyo and Maseko, 2016 acknowledge the existence of learners who have shown poor performance in Zimbabwe and argued that learners' performance in some of the slow learners in Zimbabwe was promulgated by social factors like the poor socio-economic background of the parents. Some learners claimed that their parents would not assist them with their school work and would rather send them to work in the fields before going to school. This emphasizes what SIAS, 2014 states when it indicated a lack of parental involvement and recognition of their studies.

### **3.2.3 Progressed learners in the United States of America**

In the US learners in the slow learner trap are referred to as students with borderline intellectual functioning Shaw, 2010. Shaw described these learners as learners who had low intelligence and academic performance but did not qualify for special education for either cognitive or learning disabilities Shaw, 2010. The No Child Left behind Act (NCLBA) covers all learners from around all of the American states and its major intention is to ensure availability of resources and support to all learners referred to as slow learners NCLB, 2001. Just like Zimbabwe, the US differs from South Africa in that its underperforming learners are not moved to the next grade but rather attended and assisted in the same grade they did not pass.

Comparatively speaking the learners from the three backgrounds show similarities in underperformance promulgated by different factors, but the difference between the three progression policies of these countries is that only learners in South Africa are pushed to the next grade without qualifying for promotion in that grade. Learners in Zimbabwe were given most experienced teachers who were experts in their field of teaching (e.g., particular subjects that they mastered) while the US ensured that availability of abundant resources to all educators especially those teaching learners with cognitive challenges.

The researcher agrees with the efforts made by the two latter countries to ensure that gaps that their cognitively challenged learners had are bridged through effective teaching and repetition of concepts to bring them on par with other learners rather than just pushing them up even when their understanding was still one or two grades behind.

## **3.3 TEACHING PROGRESSED LEARNERS**

### **3.3.1 Different teaching methods and approaches**

Various teaching methods could be used to approach learners during teaching: reading and storytelling, immersion, grammar-translation method, audio-lingual method, communicative language teaching, suggestopedia, total physical response, think-pair-

share, direct instruction, indirect instruction, repetition, differentiated instruction and many more, DBE, Home Language Activities Manual, 2012.

Teaching proficiency through storytelling is outlined in the DBE, Home Language Activities Manual, 2012 as a method that conveys events in words, images and sounds, often by improvisation and embellishment. This method of teaching embraces the culture of storytelling or narratives. Immersion, on the other hand, is outlined as a method that is based on extensive exposure to surroundings or conditions that are native or pertinent to the object of study, DBE, 2012. Grammar-translation was according to Chutima Intarapanich, 2013 a teaching method that focuses on developing the learners' appreciation of the target's language literature and teaching the language. The audio-lingual method is outlined by Intarapanich, 2013 from the behaviourist point of view as a method where language learning is regarded as the acquisition of correct language habits. Intarapanich outlines Communicative Language Teaching as stressing the need for communicative competence as opposed to linguistic competence. These and many others do not assist the course of teaching the progressed learners but rather the teaching methods which are more relevant to the teaching of the progressed learners are discussed below.

### **3.3.2 Relevant teaching methods or approaches for teaching progressed learners**

The following methods were relevant to the teaching of the progressed learners, repetition of learning content, direct instruction, indirect instruction, and differentiated instruction.

## **3.4 CHALLENGES REGARDING TEACHING PROGRESSED LEARNERS**

One of the challenges of teachers in South Africa is teaching the progressed learners the E-FAL (E-FAL) in grade six. Teachers find teaching E-FAL to grade six progressed learners very challenging as at times they are supposed to use the Code Switching (CS) methods. Code Switching is when teachers use the learners' Home Language to translate English

learning content. It is a disadvantage to using this method as the actual desired outcome is to see learners who are able to speak the English Language fluently in this grade.

### **3.4.1 Teaching resources for teaching progressed learners**

Zama, 2014 adds that lack of resources like reading books for South African learners contributes to challenges of the progressed learners to interact in the E-FAL as subject and other related subjects taught in English. This lack of resources like reading materials which is mostly found in the rural schools of South Africa is common in most Lichtenburg schools which are in farms and villages. Learners in educationally impoverished circumstances do not do well in their studies, for example, in situations where the school does not have a library and the school management is unwilling to buy teaching aids like charts, the learners learn with greater difficulty than those in a school where there are print-rich walls in classrooms, a library and a reading for leisure period in the school time table. Resources like charts and words on walls assist with incidental reading and learners can learn and are not surprised by new words during a spelling test or a reading activity.

According to Moyo and Maseko, 2016 learners' backgrounds relating to the availability of resources at home like books, electronic resources such as television and computer, study desks for their own use and general support at home were crucial. Moyo and Maseko further added that learners' non-exposure to educational resources from home affected their poor performance compared to those who had access to such resources. The researcher concurs to this because, in his opinion, it implies that learners the resources mentioned above enhance the learners' learning through incidental learning while they interact more with the learning outside the classroom.

### **3.4.2 Teachers' pedagogical knowledge to enhance teaching progressed learners**

Another challenge encountered in teaching progressed learners is the proficiency of teachers in teaching the subject. Behroozi and Amoozegar, 2013 outline teacher

proficiency into three categories, the teacher, the context and the approach. Teacher proficiency is a challenge in teaching the progressed learners especially if teacher proficiency in English is poor including his/her inability to use the technological instruments available to assist him/her in teaching. Where teachers' competency in speaking English is questionable or poor, there is a challenge on the emphasis of the grammatical structure of English. Teachers cannot achieve what they aspire to achieve in teaching progressed learners if they cannot properly plan for oral activities that they intend to do with learners. Systemic problems like over-crowded classes, limited teaching time, limited teaching resources and lack of conducive environment also affect learning Behroozi and Amoozegar, 2013. Another challenge that most teachers have in teaching the progressed learners is the lack of an appropriate teaching approach due to the curriculum which is too narrow. Most teachers in the Lichtenburg District are trained but have not been adequately trained to work with the new curriculum except for short courses, such as three to four days workshops. This leads to inadequate evaluation of progressed learners as all learners are evaluated the same, whether gifted or progressed. The Annual Teaching Plans which teachers had to accomplish in a particular period also contributed to the unreasonable evaluation of the progressed learners during teaching and learning because some teachers rushed to be on par with them rather than concentrating on assisting the progressed learners.

In addition to that Timperley H, Wilson A, Barrar H, and Fung I, had a strong argument when they emphasized that improving teacher proficiency through the workshop is not the ideal solution to solving poor learner performance. Timperley et al. argued that the professional development of teachers ought to actually enhance teachers in decision making about their classroom within the context of deeply understood relevant theory. They further added that this exercise needs to engage teachers as thinking professionals, as intellectual workers rather than treating them as technicians who merely need to be taught what to do and then subjected to compliance measures to ensure that they do it. What the researcher concludes from the statement of the authors above is that teacher are the one who is responsible for teaching learners in their diverse classrooms, therefore they need

to take a step and ensure that they seek for relevant programs that would assist them in dealing with individual learner challenges they experienced during teaching.

### **3.4.3 Teachers' attitudes towards teaching progressed learners**

The attitude of the teacher is one of the important ingredients that determines whether the teaching and learning process is successful or not. A positive attitude yields more effective results at the end of the day. Teachers' lesson plans should accommodate learners who struggle during teaching. The application of the inclusivity as outlined in the White Paper 6 during all activities taking place in the class is very important. Teacher attitude determines if the learners take their studies seriously or lose interest in their studies. Thus, the Code of Ethics, South African Council of Educators Act, 2000, sought to see teachers' interaction with their learners as pleasant at all times.

Lesson planning is also a challenge that contributes to how progressed learners perform. The study sought to understand whether teachers prepared a lesson plan that benefitted all learners of different cognitive levels (i.e., whether the lesson plan addressed the individual needs of all learners or whether it was prepared as classical). The expanded opportunities in the lesson plan should be properly used to capacitate and keep all learners busy with different assessment activities leading to the same outcome of the lesson plan. The CAPS curriculum has produced prepared lesson plans from the different publishers as a way of assisting teachers to reduce their workload. However, this step disadvantages the progressed learners because prepared lesson plans deprive them of individual diagnoses by teachers.

### **3.4.4 Systemic challenges**

A challenge that teachers face regarding teaching progressed learners is the Post Provision Model (PPM). The PPM is the formula-driven model that allocates teachers to schools based on the number of learner enrolment Ntuli, 2012. The challenge with this model is that it does not consider whether teachers absorbed by the system are unqualified, under

qualified or qualified. The other challenge with this model is that the majority of the rural schools are disadvantaged because of under-enrollment of learners due to people moving to the urban areas. Despite the differences in the allocation of teachers by the PPM, the Department of Education still requires all schools and teachers to perform the same while in the process learners in the rural areas are disadvantaged through the workload given to teachers in these schools. The few teachers found in rural schools are expected to perform the workload of more teachers than allocated, to teach, to intervene in learner challenges and to assist the progressed learners with their challenges, thus ultimately leaving the progressed learners compromised in the process.

Another challenge that teachers have regarding teaching progressed learners is lack of support to both the teachers and the progressed learners from either the parents or the Department. One of the principles of assessment, as stated according to Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS), 2014, is that teachers, parents, and learners should be centrally involved in the learning, teaching and assessment process, but this is not always the case as some of the stakeholders are not playing the part.

#### **3.4.5 Learners' attitudes towards learning**

The researcher has observed that learners' attitudes towards their learning from subject to subject differs as well as from learner to learner. Some learners give up simply because they are not motivated enough and because they believed that English is a difficult subject because they could not understand what was said during teaching. SIAS was developed in 2014 to assist learners with challenges and correcting attitudes of learners towards learning. Learners' attitudes become negative especially in a subject where they are not doing well and the reception from the subject teacher is not inclusive of them but focuses on other learners during teaching.

Learners' attitudes play an important role in their learning; some do not take responsibility for their learning, are often absent while others bunk classes. To avoid the development of negative attitudes from the progressed learners, learners' efforts should be recognised at



all times even when the answers provided by these learners are not correct. When learners are progressed, it is vital that they are assured support in the next year through the programs designed by the teacher to assist them individually. Lack of support to the progressed learners is exacerbated by the illiteracy of parents or guardians. When parents are illiterate, they cannot support learners even when they wish to.

The other factor that contributes to the challenges regarding teaching progressed learners is of the socio-economic status of communities from which learners came. The socio-economic status of learners has an impact on how learners learn best. Learners who came from stable economic backgrounds are likely to achieve more effectively in the E-FAL subject because they are more exposed to incidental reading and other resources that could improve their interaction with English as the subject. They have parents who buy and read magazines and newspapers and they are also exposed to television and computers where there is print or the spoken language hence their reading skills improve. The teaching of the progressed learners who do not have the advantage of a print enriched home is a challenge because the only time their morphological structure and reading skills can be improved is only in the presence of the teacher.

#### **3.4.6 Maximising retention and minimising learner dropouts**

Minimising progression and maximising retention is an advantage to the system. Progression of learners to the next grade means learners are able to move with their peers or age groups to the next phase of schooling rather than being in the same class with learners far younger they are. When the progression policy was implemented, it helped to keep learners in schools because most learners who failed took the option of giving up and dropping out of school. When learners were progressed, it assisted the system in ways of maintaining discipline in schools because older learners were assisted to move to the grades and phases equal to their age and peer groups. Where learners remain in the same grades multiple times, misbehaviour like bullying and disrespect become the order of the day in schools. To maximise retention of learners in schools required that challenges experienced by the learners in their previous grades when progressed should be recorded

and used as a working document in the forthcoming year. This means that these learners would have expanded opportunities to address their challenges rather than giving up on them thus leading them to eventual dropout.

### **3.5 Teaching strategies to improve teacher proficiency regarding the teaching of progressed learners in primary schools**

According to the Department of Basic Education, learners who cannot pass the previous grade in a phase should not be retained for the second time in the same grade of the phase. Progressed learners face different challenges and different methods can assist these learners to understand, synthesise and comprehend the learning content more effectively. Among others are the following teaching techniques listed below.

#### **3.5.1 Repetition of the learning content**

Learning by repetition could be used to teach progressed learners; this type of technique allows the skill to be practiced and rehearsed over and over again during teaching and learning, Professional Learning Board, 2019. The Professional Learning Board (PLB), 2019 stated in their newsletter that as the skill was practiced and rehearsed over days and weeks, the activity became easier and easier while naturally forcing the skill to the subconscious level where it was permanently stored for recall and habitual use at any time. This technique allows learners who struggle to learn at the pace of the Annual Teaching Plan, for example, the progressed learners in time and with repetition learn to understand a required activity simply because of doing it again and again.

Repetition requires more time from dedicated teachers for teaching, especially the progressed learners; every teacher should prepare a separate schedule of teaching to give progressed learners more time to interact with the teacher individually at their own individual pace. Repetition techniques require the teacher to assess and diagnose learners properly during teaching and learning allocated for the notional time. Thus, learner challenges can be identified, written down and attached to the name of the learner as a

way of preparing for the intervention during expanded opportunities that these learners should be afforded according to the schedule.

### **3.5.2 Indirect instruction**

Indirect instruction is the teaching strategy that is mainly learner-centered and seeks a high level of learner involvement in their learning process (VIU Teaching and Learning Handbook). This strategy of teaching includes reflective discussion, concept mapping, writing, reading and others. Through extensive teaching and interaction with the progressed learners, the teacher should be able to diagnose learners, intervene where they struggle and come up with proper remediation.

The best way to apply the strategy above is through the Process Approach. Process Approach is defined by Hoadley and Jansen, 2009 as implementing a curriculum that is developmental, aiming to improve learners' capacity to learn as part of the learning process, rather than passing or failing them. Through the process approach, the same lesson is presented to the learners at the same time, but the teacher still diagnoses all learners individually and attends to their individual needs with the lesson to follow. This approach does not only seek to achieve the narration of answers from learners, but its major aim is also to ensure that all individual learners are engaged in the teaching and learning process where all of them individually synthesise the learning content differently at their own pace. On the other hand, Ruutmann and Kipper, 2011, outline indirect instruction as the teaching approach in which concepts, patterns, and abstractions are taught in the context of strategies that emphasize, concepts learning, inquiry learning and problem-based learning. The latter scholars further added that there are other ways to use indirect strategies. Other ways have a higher degree of teacher-directed activities while at the same time other ways have more actively involved learners in planning and designing their instructional activities, Ruutmann and Kipper, 2011.

Process approach, in the opinion of the researcher, is the best method that for teaching progressed learners because it allows the teacher to properly intervene to address all

learner challenges and to use the expanded opportunity component of the lesson plan to capacitate learners struggling to achieve at the pace of the Annual Teaching Plan.

To the researcher, this implies that as we teach the progressed learners at school, curriculum delivery should promote a process whereby teachers devise a proper diagnosis for every individual learner and a plan for remediation to help these progressed learners to pass to the next grade by meeting necessary requirements, not on the basis of progression policy. In light of the above, the researcher argues that teaching progressed learners should not be treated as an activity but as a process. Progressed learners should not be given a one size fits all curriculum in practice, but each should be treated as a unique individual with specific individual learning challenges.

### **3.5.3 Interactive Instruction**

Peer tutoring is one of the interactive instruction strategies that teachers could use to teach the progressed learners. This method is called interactive because it allows learners to interact with their peers and teachers to develop social skills and abilities to organise their thoughts and to develop a rational argument as expressed in the VIU Teaching and Learning Handbook. In the opinion of the researcher, this strategy of teaching best puts all learners in a place where everyone can raise his/her opinion whether correct or incorrect.

Bowman-Perrott et al. 201 define peer tutoring as a teaching strategy that involves learners helping each other to learn content through repetition of concepts. Peer tutoring can also be defined as a class of practices and strategies that employs peers as one-on-one teachers to provide individualised instruction, practice, repetition, and clarification of concepts Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013. On the other hand, Boud, 2013 refers to peer learning as students learning from and with each other in both formal and informal ways. According to Boud, the emphasis is on the learning process, including the emotional support learners offer each other as far as the learning task itself Boud, 2013. Nguyen, 2013 defines peer tutoring as an instructional method that pairs high-performing learners

to tutor lower-performing learners in a classroom setting or in a common venue outside of the school under the supervision of the teacher.

In the researcher's opinion, peer tutoring is where learners interact with each other with the common goal of ensuring that both sides should be able to comprehend the learning content at the end of this interaction. The common goal is explaining the learning content to each other, with others asking questions and the other responding as a way of clarifying. During this process no learner stands to be disadvantaged; this exercise is mutually beneficial. The gifted learners are refreshed and assess their understanding by explaining concepts to the progressed learners, at the same time the progressed or slow learners can grasp concepts explained on the same level of word choices and maturity.

The researcher believes that peer tutoring assists a great deal in the process of teaching and learning because learners can ask each other questions in an informal setting unlike in the classroom where they had to choose words correctly which may at times derail the intention of the question asked. The researcher agrees with Boud that learning is a process that involves emotions because if learners do not understand, they become frustrated and so do teachers, especially when they have to repeat explanations without progress while having certain targets to meet at the end of the day. For this reason, the researcher agrees that peer tutoring in progressed learners should be employed as a positive intervention.

#### **3.5.4 Differentiated instruction**

Differentiated instruction is a model of teaching which takes into cognisance that different learners in the same class have different cognitive levels, abilities, challenges and learning styles. Gunter et al. 2010 define this model as making differentiated decisions by knowing all the learners you teach, their readiness for the grade, interests and individual profiles. Alberta, 2005 concurs that with differentiated instruction, the teacher aims to create a learning situation that matches learners' current learning abilities and learning styles while stretching their abilities and encouraging them to try new ways of learning. On the other hand, Levi, 2008 concurs that learners do not learn the same way, so teachers cannot

teach them all the same way. Levi further emphasises that teachers should adjust teaching styles to reflect the learner needs.

Subsequently, the researcher agreed that differentiated instruction best suits the progressed learners as the model is more learner-based than focusing on the teachers' expectations. The researcher also agrees that when learners' abilities and individualities in learning are taken into cognisance and prioritised, the teachers can diagnose them from the effort they make in trying to learn their own ways. Progressed learners are progressed for different reasons, therefore it is very important that the teacher first knows and understands the progressed learners before getting in class to teach them. Teachers also need to go through the learner profiles in order to understand what the views of the previous teacher were about the learner he/she is about to teach.

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

The researcher acknowledged that the challenge of growing numbers of the progressed learners since the implementation of the NPPPR, 2011 and NPA, 2011 and the new curriculum policy, (CAPS) has become a concern to the future of the South African education especially in both the General Education Training and Further Education Training Bands of the Department of Basic Education. After comparing how the other two countries handle the issue of slow learners in their respective countries, the researcher agreed that when effective methods are used to intervene on learner challenges, learners can be enabled to learn as expected and progress on their own. The researcher further agrees that if good strategies of teaching are applied, with thoroughly prepared lesson plans and effective teaching methods and where learners are motivated to take part in their learning, the number of progressed learners in South Africa could reduce with time.

Planning for individual learners is also very important and should be treated as a critical stage of teaching and learning. Parents should take part in and recognise the efforts done by their children on a daily basis at school. Attitudes of both teachers and progressed learners should be given attention, especially where they are negative towards the process

of teaching and learning. Differentiated teaching has always proven to be the best approach to teaching the progressed learners as it accommodates learners of different cognitive levels and allows the proper intervention to their challenges as individuals.

The process of teaching and learning can only succeed when intervention to learner challenges is done not to create evidence for learners to be retained, but to assist learners to understand the learning content more effectively than before. On the other hand, the issue of PPM had proven to promote the increasing number of progressed learners in our country. Where the number of teachers is minimal, teachers cannot assist struggling learners because of the workload they carry, thus negatively affecting the progressed learners. The Department of Basic Education in South Africa should ensure that all recommendations made previously in Annual National Assessments are implemented and progress thereof reported annually.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter provided an overview of the literature review about exploring teachers' views regarding teaching progressed learners in primary schools. This chapter examined the research design and methodology suitable for this study. In order to examine the research design and methodology, the following sub-headings were looked into, research design, research paradigm, research approach, population and sampling techniques, data collecting techniques and analysis used to build an in-depth understanding of teaching progressed learners in primary schools. The credibility, trustworthiness as well as ethical considerations were taken into consideration.

#### **4.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGNS**

##### **4.2.1 Research design**

McMillan and Schumacher 2010:20 describe research design as procedures for conducting the study. Therefore, the aim of a research design is to specify a plan to enable the researcher to generate empirical evidence that can be used in answering the research questions.

##### **4.2.2 Different research designs**

There are different types of research designs: for example, a case study, narrative design, and phenomenological designs. Maree et al. 2010 define a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.



This study employed a single case study since it focused on the teachers' views regarding teaching progressed learners in primary schools.

### **4.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

According to Babbie, 2010:33 a paradigm is a fundamental model or frame of reference used to organise observations and reasoning. The following are paradigms that researchers could use in research: the interpretivist, post-positivist, pragmatist, advocacy is also known as participatory and the constructivist paradigms. These were investigated to ascertain which would best underpin this study. These paradigms among others included post-positivism, pragmatism, advocacy which was also known as participatory, the constructivist and interpretivist worldviews or paradigms which are similar and often used as an approach to qualitative research.

The post-positivist paradigm is characterised by Maree, 2010 according to the assumptions of determination, reductionism, empirical observation, including measurement and theory verification. Creswell, 2009 outlines constructivism and interpretivism as the paradigms where human beings construct meanings as they engage in the world they are interpreting. This assumes the meaning attributed to multiple participants. Multiple participants imply that different participants in a study come up with their own understanding in relation to the topic under study. Social constructivism according to Creswell allows humans to engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives and experiences. Thus, the study of the progressed learners was related to social constructivism because a lack of learner understanding is an educational challenge and a social or societal problem.

Another paradigm stated above was advocacy or participatory worldview which Creswell describes as recursive or dialectical and focused on bringing about change in practices. This paradigm is characterised by political empowerment, issue-oriented, collaborative and change-oriented assumptions. This paradigm is more focused on the emancipation of others as it is more politically inclined. The participatory worldview is more involved in

issues relating to politics or topics which had political background under study. Consequence of action, problem-centered, pluralistic and real-world practice-oriented summarize the characteristics of the pragmatism paradigm which is the last paradigm discussed. This paradigm does not commit to any philosophy and gives researchers freedom of choice. In this paradigm, according to Creswell, the truth is what works at a time; there is no yardstick used to research the topics under this paradigm.

In light of the different paradigms outlined above, the researcher aligned his study with the social constructivist and the interpretivist paradigm as the two were appropriate for qualitative research. The researcher chose the interpretive paradigm because it entailed the exploration of a social problem in education, in this case, the rising numbers of progressed learners in selected primary schools in Lichtenburg. The researcher opted for the interpretivist paradigm because the problem under study was a societal problem where education was concerned. Teachers who participated in the study shared their experiences regarding teaching progressed learners in grade six, with E-FAL as a subject. Social constructivism was also a chosen paradigm as it allowed the generation of theories by participants to come up with relevant recommendations in relation to the topic of the study.

#### **4.4 RESEARCH APPROACH**

Yin (2009:26) defines a research approach as a logical plan for getting from here to there; it addresses the initial set of questions to be answered. There were three types of research designs: the qualitative research design, quantitative research design, and mixed-methods research design. The qualitative research design relies on words while the quantitative research design relies on numbers. The mixed-method is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The distinction between these research designs is that in the qualitative research design, researchers are afforded an opportunity to explore through open-ended questions and individuals can give their views in the participants' settings. This research design (qualitative research design) allowed the researcher to interact with participants by asking questions to collect data. The qualitative research design also afforded an opportunity of analysis of data from the information that was collected from

different participants with all leading towards a common theme guided by the topic under study.

Qualitative research design allows researchers to come up with a description of the phenomenon despite how complex it appears. This is achieved by gathering different thoughts provided by different participants. Qualitative research design has certain advantages, Shidur (2017) eliciting deeper insights into designing, administering, interpreting, assessment and testing and exploring test-takers' behaviour, perceptions, feelings, and understanding. This research design allows the researchers to work with a team of other experts in the field of study to assist in directing the thoughts and confirming the commonality of the findings through the process of research. It also affords the researcher to design his research study in a manner that is open to the interpretation of data gathered by the researcher or the participants who took part in the study.

In contrast, quantitative research designs focus more on the testing of theories in a deductive way. In this research design, data collected are generalized and the researcher is restricted by the efforts to protect his/her findings from biased decisions. Another assumption of this research design is that there is sometimes a replication of findings; information and numbers are used more than words and questions are more close-ended than the open-ended questions of qualitative research design. "Quantitative research also involved the larger sample than qualitative research design and did take a longer time to collect data" Shidur, (2017) also adds that quantitative research designs also take snapshots of the phenomenon, are not in-depth, and overlook the test-takers and testers' experiences and what they mean by something.

The researcher opted to use a qualitative research design as it was best suited for the topic under study. The issue of progressed learners required more than one participant to share their views about teaching these learners to achieve the aim of reducing the rising numbers of progressed learners in Lichtenburg on an annual basis. Multiple inputs from the participants, who were in this case, teachers teaching progressed learners, led to deeper

insights from different perspectives and environments and assisted in devising strategies to improve the performance of the progressed learners.

Creswell, 2009 distinguishes these research methodologies by defining them as follows: qualitative research methodology is the means of exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. He further emphasises that the process of qualitative research methodology involves issues like emerging questions and procedures, data are collected in the participants' setting and the focus is on individual meaning, a description of the complexity of the situation. On the other hand, Maree, 2010 describes qualitative research methodology as research that collects rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is studied. Maree adds that qualitative research methodology focuses on how individuals and groups view and understand the world and construct meaning out of their experiences.

Through qualitative research methodology, data can be gathered through involving several people to participate and give their own views of a phenomenon being studied. However, data collected is always context-bound and thus data collected is not identical for each participant although the context is related. Quantitative research methodology as outlined by Creswell, 2009 could be defined as a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. Similarly, Maree and Pietersen, 2010 explain quantitative research methodology as a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected subgroup of the universe or population to generalize the findings to the universe being studied. Creswell, 2009 continues that variables can be measured with the use of instruments, and numbered data analyzed with the use of statistical instruments. Creswell, 2009 describes the mixed method as an approach of inquiry that combines both qualitative and quantitative research methodology. This method, in Creswell's view, involves philosophical assumptions, the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches and the overall strength of the study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research alone.

This study employed the qualitative research approach as it employed the interactive strategy of inquiry, an interaction between the researcher and the participants. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews to discover the phenomenological aspect that the researcher wished to investigate.

The researcher opted for this line of inquiry as it assisted in gathering data from different sources, in this case, the participants from different primary schools teaching E-FAL to grade six progressed learners. The researcher set predetermined questions that the participants had to respond to; at the same time the researcher had the latitude to probe the participants to elaborate where there was a need. The researcher chose semi-structured interviews because he could redirect the participants through probing if he observed that his participants were losing track of the topic. The study was undertaken through the qualitative research methodology, because there were several participants who were requested to take part in the study to provide information from their own personal experiences from different backgrounds, in this case, the teaching of the progressed learners in Lichtenburg selected primary schools.

#### **4.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

Population sampling is defined as methods used to generalise the findings found when a population was studied Maree and Petersen (2010). According to Maree and Petersen, (2010), the population represents a phenomenon studied for a specific purpose. On the other hand, McMillan and Schumacher, 2010 defines a population as a group of individuals with common characteristics. The population in this study was the teachers teaching the progressed learners in grade six in the primary schools around the Lichtenburg District.

Sample refers to the actual selected size or units of the population that represent the entire population under study Maree and Pietersen, 2010. McMillan and Schumacher define a sample as a small number of individuals selected from the population that would form the basis of a research study. There are two different population sampling methods: random sampling and stratified sampling methods. The researcher in this study selected six of the

teachers teaching the progressed learners in grade six of the selected primary schools around Lichtenburg District.

#### **4.5.1 Sampling methods**

There are two different population sampling methods which were probability sampling and non-probability sampling methods. According to Maree and Pietersen, 2010 probability sampling method is a method used when we believe that the sample used could satisfy the requirements of the entire population. Maree further describes probability methods as methods based on the principles of randomness and probability theory, while the non-probability methods are not. Probability sampling has four types: simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, and cluster sampling methods. Simple random sampling is outlined where a population under study is numbered sequentially such that each element of this population can be identified uniquely. The key component of this sampling method is that the numbers are determined randomly. Systematic sampling is where the sample is drawn systematically moving through the sample frame and selecting; the starting point in this sampling method is done randomly, Maree and Pietersen, 2010. Another sampling method mentioned above is the stratified sampling method whereby a population is divided into several homogeneous, non-overlapping groups like strata. These strata could be formed based on the natural subgroups Maree and Pietersen, 2010. This method, according to Maree and Pietersen, 2010 could also be used to address the problems of non-homogeneous populations. The last sampling method indicated above is like the stratified sampling method in the sense that these groups are divided into a number of non-overlapping groups; however, these groups are usually smaller than the strata found in the stratified sampling method and called clusters.

In the non-probability sampling method, there is no random selection of population and it is also perceived to be risky if an important conclusion is drawn using this sampling method Maree and Petersen, 2010. Non-probability sampling includes criterion sampling, snowball sampling, and convenient purposive sampling. Criterion sampling is defined by Maree, 2010 as to where the researcher decides on typical characteristics of the participants to be

included in the study. The criteria may be age, gender, class, profession, marital status or place of residence. This sampling method restricted the researcher to ensure that all the participants who were to take part in the research study met the necessary criteria prescribed for the desired outcome. Criterion sampling method in most cases might use members of the community with particular knowledge or expertise of the research topic under study. For example, if a topic had to do with health-related issues, the researcher would be restricted to sample participants with the knowledge of health-related issues and who were professionals in that regard.

Maree, 2010 further explains snowball sampling as a method whereby participants with whom contact has already been made are used to penetrate the social networks to refer the researcher to other participants who could take part or contribute to the study. In the researcher's understanding, this sampling method implies that the process of identifying participants and the network first has to take place before the research study can be undertaken. This sampling method requires the assistance of an outside individual to assist in identifying the participants who are in the network. The network of participants is the key concept for this sampling method; hence it is also called chain referral sampling. Before the study can take place, a chain of people with particular expertise and willingness to participate are first established.

In this study, the researcher used the stratified purposive sampling method to sample the teachers who could positively contribute to issues relating to teaching progressed learners in the Lichtenburg District. The reason for choosing this sampling method was because if teachers had been teaching the same subject to the same class or group of learners for a particular period, they would, therefore, be well-positioned to contribute relevant views in response to the research question of this study. A stratified purposive sampling method was employed to sample six grade, six teachers, teaching the progressed learners E-FAL subject.

A total of six ( $n=6$ ) participants were drawn from the two ( $n=2$ ) primary schools. That is, three ( $n=3$ ) grade 6 E-FAL teachers were selected from each of the two ( $n=2$ ) primary

schools. These teachers were sampled according to their experience in teaching the progressed learners for previous years because their experience would assist in giving relevant answers to this study as they had interacted with these learners for quite some time. At the same time, they were chosen to ensure that the data captured was properly saturated.

This study focused on grade six teachers teaching E-FAL to classes with the progressed learners in both primary schools. Teachers were full-time and had more than seven (n=7) years of teaching experience and teaching progressed learners in grade six classes in Lichtenburg primary schools. Participants were selected from schools that had been struggling to produce good results for a period of time in E-FAL and all other subjects offered in English to this grade (grade six). The reason for choosing the schools was due to gaps identified by the Annual National Assessment and these teachers had interacted with these learners for a lengthy period.

## **4.6 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

Explanations and descriptions provided by the research participants provided information to the researcher to develop credible answers to the main research question. Strategies for collecting data such as observation, interviews, and documents enable researchers to collect data deemed relevant for the phenomenon under investigation Nieuwenhuis, 2007:81. There are different ways in which data could be collected in education research, and these methods are interviews, focus groups and documents and observation.

### **4.6.1 Interviews**

Maree, 2010 describes an interview as a two-way conversation that takes place between the researcher and the participants to collect data about their ideas, beliefs, views, and opinions about a particular phenomenon. An interview is an oral conversation held between two people with one having the intent to understand a phenomenon that was best known to the interviewee or seeking to understand how much the person interviewed understands



of a phenomenon. The major aim of interviewing the participants was for the researcher to understand more clearly what they thought of the phenomenon under study, that is, the researcher wished to see the subject under study through the eyes of participants.

Interviews enabled the researcher to understand the phenomenon he wished to study in-depth based on other people's inputs. Gill, 2010 concurs with Maree that the purpose of an interview as a data collection method is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on specific matters. He further adds that qualitative methods such as interviews provide a deeper understanding of social phenomenon than would be obtained purely from quantitative methods such as a questionnaire.

Three types of interviews can be used during qualitative research: an open-ended interview, semi-structured interview and the structured interview. Maree, 2010 outlines an open-ended interview as an interview in the form of a conversation between the researcher and the participant with the intention to explore with the participant's views, ideas, beliefs and attitudes about certain events or phenomenon. The semi-structured interview is a commonly used method of data collection, especially in research projects where it corroborates data emerging from the other data sources Maree, 2010. The structured interview is a method where questions are detailed and developed in advance, similar to survey research. This data collection method is frequently used in multiple case studies or larger sample groups to ensure consistency Maree, 2010.

#### **4.6.2 Focus groups**

Focus groups are another method of data collection that assumes that the group interaction would be productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experiences and releasing inhibitions that might otherwise discourage other participants from disclosing information Maree, 2010. Gill, 2010 adds that focus groups generate information on collective views and the meanings that lie behind those views, thus generating a rich understanding of participants' understanding and beliefs.

#### **4.6.3 Documents**

Maree, 2010 defines documents as data gathering techniques that focus on all types of written communications that might shed light on the phenomenon investigated. Among these written data sources are published and unpublished documents, company reports, memoranda, administrative documents, company reports, letters, newspaper articles, emails, and other documents.

#### **4.6.4 Observation**

Observation is defined by Lopez and Whitehead, 2013 as the process of watching the daily life and behaviors of the participants in their natural setting to record aspects such as social position and function, or actions and interactions. The latter authors argue that in qualitative research, observation is mostly unstructured, and the researchers enter the field with no predetermined schedule as to what they might see or hear. Maree, 2011 argues that observation is the systematic process of recording the behavioral patterns of participants, objects, and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them. Maree, 2009 further states that observation is an everyday activity whereby we use our senses (e.g., seeing, hearing, touching smelling and tasting) but also our intuition to gather bits of data. Maree adds that observation is an essential data-gathering technique that can provide the researcher with an insider perspective of group dynamics and behaviors in a different setting.

In this research study, the researcher opted to use the semi-structured interview as a method of collecting data from the participants. The researcher believed that a semi-structured interview was the best-suited technique for this study as it allowed him to interact with different participants to answer the predetermined set of questions that would direct the participants to stick to the topic of the study. Furthermore, it allowed the researcher to probe the participants and seek clarity where he was uncertain of what the participants had said during interviews. In this research study, data were collected through a semi-structured interview, and the participants were given a consent form before they could take

part. The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder during these interview sessions. An appendix with questions asked during the interviews is attached and the themes that emerged during the interviews were classified as follows: lesson presentation, the medium of instruction, inclusivity during teaching, teaching methods used, language proficiency and expanded opportunities.

#### **4.6.5 Non-participatory observation**

Non-participatory observation is an unobtrusive qualitative data collection technique or strategy for gathering primary data about some aspect of the social world without interacting directly with the participants Maree, 2011. The researcher visited the sampled participants and observed how they teach E-FAL to grade six progressed learners. The observation was done during normal teaching and learning hours with the permission of the participants and their principals and the observation lasted for thirty minutes per session. Only teachers teaching E-FAL in grade six classes with progressed learners were observed.

Non-participatory observation is described by MacFarlan, 2017 as observation where the researcher observes the participants without actively participating in their activities. She further adds that non-participatory observation is a technique used to understand the phenomenon studied by entering the community and the social systems involved. Maree, 2011 concurs that during this observation period, the researcher only enters the situation to focus on his/her role as the observer. The researcher might look for patterns of behaviour in a community to understand the assumptions, values, and beliefs of the participants and to make sense of the social dynamics but the researcher remains uninvolved and does not influence the dynamics of the setting.

During this study, data was collected through a non-participatory observation method where grade six teachers teaching the progressed learners had to teach with the researcher taking notes of the patterns, behaviour of both the progressed learners and the teacher. The researcher has attached an appendix on the non-participatory observation

and the following themes were addressed: lesson planning, the medium of instruction, inclusivity during teaching, teaching method used teacher language proficiency and expanded opportunities. During this observation period, the researcher used the running records to capture more detail which was continuous and could account for what was observed. Participants were given an opportunity to give consent before this observation could take place and a copy of their consent has been attached.

#### **4.6.6 Document analysis**

Document analysis is the third data collection strategy used to study and evaluate existing documents to understand their substantive content or to illuminate deeper meanings about the phenomenon being investigated De Vos et al., 2007:377. According to Priya and Viswambharan, 2015 the purpose of document analysis is to assist the researcher in interpretation and to give voice and meaning around the problem being investigated. In this study, the researcher, intended to analyse the approach which teachers used regarding teaching progressed learners as there had been an increase in numbers of the progressed learners in the Lichtenburg district in recent years. The researcher in this study wanted to explore and examine the extent to which relevant documents were used by teachers. These documents among others included the lesson plans, CAPS documents on E-FAL, Policies of inclusivity and intervention. Teachers teaching grade six were sampled as participants of the study and were interviewed after they have given consent to take part in the study. Appendix B was completed by teachers who took part in this study.

Data in this study were collected through conversations between the researcher and the participants and conversation analysis was used to analyse data collected through the use of face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Conversation analysis is the study of a talk which generally attempts to describe the ordinary Makhoba, 2009. Data were collected from the grade six teachers with at least seven years of experience teaching E-FAL to progressed learners. The researcher intended to explore their views with regard to teaching progressed learners over the previous years and to seek to establish new teaching strategies and approaches different from those which had been used by these teachers

before as a way of improving performance in these learners. The researcher has attached a document analysis instrument which served as a guide to documents analysed. The following documents were analysed: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for E-FAL; EFAL Lesson Plans; Assessment Plans and activities; White paper 6 of 2001; National protocol for assessment; Subject school-based assessment policy; and National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the national curriculum statement, grade R-12. The use of non-participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis helped in the triangulation of data collection with the aim of getting the most relevant information.

#### **4.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is defined by Hashemnezhad, 2015:60, De Vos et al. 2009: 73 and Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:150 as a process of analysing data and interpreting the results. Babbie 2007:378 defines data analysis as the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships.

The researcher studied recordings of data obtained using the semi-structured interviews with Grade Six E-FAL teachers. The collected data guided the researcher to organise his data according to the themes. Collected data was then organised and transcribed. The process of transcribing data involved writing down what the participants said Maree, 2011. The data were then coded. The researcher established the themes or categories where data were grouped. Data was then analysed by carefully studying the themes and identifying how each was related to the other and comparing them to a literature review to answer the research question.

The researcher then visited the sampled participants and observed how they taught E-FAL to grade six progressed learners. The observation was done during normal teaching and learning hours with the permission of the participants and their principals and the observation lasted for thirty minutes per session. Only teachers teaching E-FAL in grade six classes with progressed learners were observed.

Four main documents were analysed, namely: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement; E-FAL Lesson Plans; Assessment Plans and activities; White paper six of 2001; National protocol for assessment; Subject school-based assessment policy; and National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirement of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, Grade R-12.

Data collected during the interviews, non-participatory observation, and document analysis were captured and stored on a computer. All captured documents were encrypted in order to avoid easy access to information provided by the participants. Both electronic and document data will be stored for five years. The researcher has kept the data in a password-protected computer in a very safe place.

#### **4.7.1 Trustworthiness in data collection and analysis**

Trustworthiness in data collection was seen by the researcher undertaking this study as providing data that were encompassed by the qualities of validity, reliability, and credibility. Data collected by the researcher were neutral, dependable with confirmability elements (i.e., the information provided by the researcher was reliable, confirmed by sources who were participants to the study and aligned to what other scholars had written in relation to the topic under study).

The researcher had after collecting and arranging data according to how it was provided by the participants, verified with the participants as to whether what was written was to the best knowledge of the participants. After verifying with the participants, the researcher then went through the recording tapes and compared them with the notes taken during face to face interviews. The researcher proofread the information captured to ascertain that what was discussed with the participants was correctly captured. The researcher also requested one of the peer researchers to go through what was captured for verification.

#### **4.7.2 Credibility**

Credibility refers to how confident the researcher is with the data collected. To enhance the credibility of the study, the researcher chose teachers who had been teaching E-FAL to progressed learners for at least the previous seven years. The researcher further visited the teachers during a teaching in non-participatory observation. Therefore, the researcher checked his findings with what was said during the interviews.

The researcher conducted the pilot of this research study by reading the questions to all the participants and checking as to whether each of the participants understood every question in the same way. The researcher further continued to satisfy the member checking process by gathering all the participants and reading the findings of his research study for information sharing or comment. The two schools which offered their teachers to take part in this research study were also provided with transcripts of how the participants had responded. This benefitted both the school and the researcher as some participants reviewed their transcripts and added more information coming from other members in the school.

#### **4.7.3 Triangulation**

According to Maree, 2011 triangulation is a traditional strategy for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation. In this study, the researcher involved six (n=6) teachers as a way of verifying what was said with the rest of the other participants. There were similarities in most of the participants' comments according to the themes.

#### **4.7.4 Transferability**

Transferability is the ability to apply research findings to different participants and their surroundings after data collection. However, the researcher must keep in mind that findings in qualitative research might not be applicable to other times, populations, schools and

situations as schools differ. The researcher had therefore written information that was applicable from the environment in which the research study was undertaken.

#### **4.8 ETHICAL CLEARANCE AND PERMISSION**

The researcher applied to the North West Department of Basic Education; Ngaka Modiri-Molema District Department of Basic Education; the school principals; the teachers; and the Lichtenburg Circuit to request permission to conduct research in the selected Lichtenburg primary schools. Permission was requested to conduct semi-structured interviews and document analysis. To ensure reliability, validity, anonymity, and confidentiality to the participants, a consent letter was issued to each participant to read and sign as an indication of willingness to participate in the research study. All the letters which were forwarded to the Ethics Committee were signed and the application for ethical clearance was approved by the Ethics Committee.

#### **4.9 CONCLUSION**

The above discussion outlined the research methodology followed in the search for an in-depth understanding of teachers' experience and perceptions in teaching the grade six progressed learners in selected Lichtenburg primary schools around Ngaka Modiri-Molema District in the North-West Province. The qualitative research design and the relevant qualitative techniques for data collection were thoroughly explained. The discussion indicated how the gathered data were analysed using the systematic process of coding, categorisation, and interpretation. The various measures needed for credibility and trustworthiness of the data collecting instruments as well as the data obtained were described. The ethical issues of importance to this study were also highlighted.



## CHAPTER 5

### PRESENTATION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the study. The aim of this study was to explore teachers' perspectives regarding teaching E-FAL to the progressed learners in grade six classes selected from two primary schools in the Lichtenburg District. This chapter focused mainly on the presentation of data collected using semi-structured interviews, document analysis and the non-participatory observations conducted to the grade six primary school teachers in Lichtenburg District as described in Chapter 4. As part of the empirical findings, the researcher commences by profiling the participants according to their qualifications and teaching experience.

#### 5.2 PARTICIPANTS INFORMATION

Participants	Gender and Qualifications	Work Profiles
Participant #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender: Female</li> <li>• Primary School Teacher</li> <li>• Qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– University Diploma in Education (Primary),</li> <li>– Further Education Diploma in Education (Management)</li> <li>– Honours Degree in Management.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience: 28 years</li> <li>• Subjects taught: Grade six: E-FAL</li> <li>• Grade seven: Natural Sciences</li> </ul>

Participant #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender: Female</li> <li>• Primary School teacher</li> <li>• Qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Senior Primary Education Diploma (Home Economics)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience: 35 years</li> <li>• Subjects taught: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade five and six: E-FAL</li> <li>• Grade four: Social Sciences</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Participant #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender: Female</li> <li>• Departmental Head</li> <li>• Primary School Teacher</li> <li>• Qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Diploma in Multi-Media</li> <li>– BA Communications</li> <li>– PGCE (English)</li> <li>– Honours in Management</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience: 7 years</li> <li>• Subject taught: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade six: English</li> <li>• Grade four and six: Life Skills</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Participant #4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender: Female</li> <li>• Primary School Teacher</li> <li>• Qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Senior Primary Education Diploma</li> <li>– ACE in Life Orientation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience: 8 years</li> <li>• Subjects taught: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade six: English</li> <li>• Grade four: Life skills</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Participant #5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender: Male</li> <li>• Primary School Teacher</li> <li>• Qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Secondary Education Diploma</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience: 8 years</li> <li>• Subjects taught: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade six: English</li> <li>• Grade seven: Technology</li> <li>• Grade five: Life Skills</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Participant #6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender: Male</li> <li>• Primary School Teacher</li> <li>• Qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Education Degree in Secondary teaching</li> <li>– Higher Education Diploma</li> <li>– ACE in English Teaching</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience: 13 years</li> <li>• Subjects taught: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade six: English</li> <li>• Grade six: Life Skills</li> <li>• Grade seven: Technology</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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### 5.3 PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Six primary school teachers teaching E-FAL to grade six progressed learners were selected, three per school per two primary schools. The researcher was not specific with requirements on the gender of the participants and therefore four of the teachers were female while the other two participants were males. Teachers were selected based on the responsibility for teaching E-FAL to the grade six classes which included progressed learners among other learners. The teachers were from two primary schools, one in a village and the other in a township.

Interviews were used as a data collection method to gather data about the profiles of the participants. During this process, the researcher interacted with individual participants to share information about his/her profile, i.e. face to face interviews were conducted at this stage. According to data presented by the participants, the researcher observed that all participants had teaching experience of over seven years in the teaching fraternity. The participants were all qualified teachers with qualifications ranging from diploma to honours degree and were qualified to teach E-FAL as a subject. The schools did not have libraries and were located in communities that were poverty-stricken. Even though these teachers were qualified to teach E-FAL, some had a questionable proficiency in English since it was difficult for them to express their views with confidence in English during the interviews.

Moreover, some participants found it difficult to use the CAPS documents and other relevant documents related to this subject like the Annual Teaching Plan, designing a good standardized lesson plan and the Programme of Assessment. All six of these teachers were inducted with the principles of the new curriculum policy, CAPS, 2011. The researcher refers to the teachers as participant #1-#6 to protect their identity. The identity of these participants and the names of the schools which took part in this study were only known to the researcher and could not be revealed. The profiles of the teacher participants are illustrated below. For the purpose of obtaining the participants profile, the following key focus areas were addressed, namely: gender, teaching experience, teaching qualification, subject specialisation, current teaching grades, monitoring of teachers' work by departmental heads, the availability of the library and its effective use, developmental workshops that addressed the teaching of progressed learners, and the availability of teaching resources.

### **5.3.1 Participant #1**

#### **5.3.1.1 Biography**

Participant #1 was a female teacher teaching in a primary school in a township. When asked about her teaching experience, she indicated that she had been teaching for the previous twenty-eight years. When asked of her highest qualification she indicated that she held a University Diploma in Education, Further Education Diploma in Management and an Honours Degree in Management. Regarding the subject specialisation, she said that she studied all primary school subjects of which English and Setswana were the major subjects of specialisation and that she also specialised in school management in her further studies. Responding to the subjects that she taught then, participant #1 indicated that she taught E-FAL in both grade six and seven and Natural Sciences in grade seven.

#### **5.3.1.2 Teaching approaches**

When asked of the teaching approaches suitable for the progressed learners, participant #1 indicated that she preferred the differentiated teaching method in approaching the

progressed learners. She said, *“Differentiated learning is to me the most effective method and approach that I normally use to teach the progressed learners because it allows me to interact with the majority of learners of different cognitive levels through different activities at the same time.”* To support her response, she emphasised that when learners were approached with different teaching styles, it aroused their interest in the lesson and they all felt accommodated.

Participant #1 could not directly tell what process approach was when asked about it but said she believed it was an approach that dealt with individual learner challenges during teaching. This was what she had to say, *“I am actually not sure what the Process Approach is, but I think it has to deal with working with teaching learners individually in the same lesson with different learning activities.”*

#### **5.3.1.3 Theories**

Responding to the learning theory that underpinned the teaching of the progressed learners she said that the interactive learning theory was relevant as it allowed the learner-centered approach more than any others.

#### **5.3.1.4 Challenges**

Regarding the challenges, she experienced regarding the teaching of the progressed learners she lamented that the classes were overcrowded, there was no parental involvement and recognition of the learners' work and that learners did not show interest in doing their school work, both classwork and homework. Responding to the question of whether she had enough teaching resources, she indicated she did not have enough charts which could address the challenge of building sound and words and ultimately the sentences for the struggling progressed learners. She added that the school in which she taught did not have a library and even the reading for leisure books were far too few to assist her in addressing the challenge in reading experienced by her learners. When asked about the resources she intended to use for effective teaching of the progressed learners,

she intended to have charts with phonics, phonemes and how to construct sentences, that is, morphology, for her struggling progressed learners. She added by saying *“Pictures make the teaching of English interesting and easier to all learners, irrespective of whether they are progressed or not, they all get interested in the lesson and get the meaning through demonstrative teaching.”*

#### **5.3.1.5 Teaching strategies**

When participant #1 was asked if she had strategies in place to enhance the teaching of the progressed learners, she said that she sometimes created time after school to address their individual challenges. Participant #1 also added that she grouped her learners according to their cognitive levels. Responding to the question of think-pair-share, she gladly outlined that she used it more often by grouping learners according to their cognitive levels which ultimately assisted because learners shared and explained the questions and instructions from the level of learner to learner which simplified the learning content.

#### **5.3.1.6 Assessment**

When asked to define the term assessment, participant #1 said, *“Assessment is the evaluation of learners through different activities either formal or informal to determine how far they have understood the learning content.”* She further indicated that assessment could be used either for measuring learner understanding as a way of determining whether they were fit to move to the next grade or not. Asked about how she catered for the progressed learners when designing the assessment activities, she said that she prepared her assessment activities from the level of the progressed learners and in that way, she was sure that everyone was covered. She said, *“I do not only use the cognitive levels when learners are writing the formal tasks, but I train my learners from the informal tasks so that when they write the formal tasks they do not become surprised.”*

Responding to the question about the common challenges regarding assessing EFAL with the progressed learners, participant #1 outlined that the major challenge regarding

assessing the progressed learners on EFAL was that teachers were already aware that the progressed learners did not understand the question paper before they start writing. Asked about how she gave feedback to the progressed learners, she indicated that sometimes she promoted peer-tutoring by asking one of the learners to do corrections on the chalkboard while others were responding, and the teacher would only guide where she was required.

When participant #1 was asked whether there were any other strategies that she employed to enhance the teaching of the progressed learners, she indicated different strategies, if not all of them were relevant depending on the type of challenge the teacher was faced regarding the challenges experienced by the progressed learners.

### **5.3.2 Participant #2**

#### **5.3.2.1 Biography**

Participant #2 was a female teaching grade four, five and six at primary school A in the township. When asked about her experience, she indicated that she had been teaching for thirty-five years and had taught only in two schools including the current one. Regarding her teaching qualification, she indicated that she held a Senior Primary Education Diploma in Home Economics and E-FAL. Responding to the questions about the subjects she was teaching, participant #2 indicated that she taught E-FAL to grade five and six. Asked if there was any other subject that she taught in any other grade, she indicated that she taught Social Sciences to grade four.

#### **5.3.2.2 Teaching approaches**

When participant #2 was asked of suitable approaches to teaching the progressed learners, she responded with passion, *“I believe in repetition, repetition, repetition of concepts because when concepts are well drilled in the learners for numerous times it becomes more difficult to forget than to remember.”* She believed in the repetition of

concepts. She was asked to support her preference of teaching approach and elaborated that when concepts were repeated, it became difficult for the learners to forget them.

#### **5.3.2.3 Theories**

When participant #2 was asked which theories underpinned the teaching of progressed learners and she said that she believed in behaviourism as it allowed working on the behaviour and attitude of the learners before teaching and learning may take place. When asked of the benefits of the learning theory above, she said: *“I know that in my class most of the learners are capable of passing on their own if they can just focus and concentrate during the lesson, the challenge is that they are the most playful in the class and more often my lesson is wasted simply because I try to get them involved by giving them the attention I should be giving learners who are paying attention to me.”* Through this statement, she indicated that most of her learners progressed, not because they had difficulties in learning but because they were playful and disruptive during the English lessons. Participant #2 concluded by saying, *“Hence I believe the behaviourism is the most relevant theory that underpins the teaching of these learners because in my case behaviour is the most critical aspect that= stands between me and succeeding in teaching the progressed learners.”*

#### **5.3.2.4 Challenges**

Subsequent to the previous questions she answered, participant #2 was asked about the challenges she encountered regarding teaching the progressed learners and she indicated numerous challenges such as overcrowded classes, lack of interest of parents when called to school, no library at the school in which she taught, therefore, helping the progressed learners with incidental reading was a challenge as most learners only interacted with letters when teaching and learning was taking place. Participant #2 also said that there were no workshops held at the school level except for those held by the Subject Education Specialists (SES). When asked about the interaction with the Subject Education Specialists, she said: *“Actually we are supposed to hold the Professional Support Forums on a quarterly basis.”*



#### 5.3.2.5 Teaching strategies

Responding to the question that required the teaching strategies in place for the progressed learners, she indicated that she used one source for the duration of the lesson plan and ensured that all language components relevant to the lesson were in that paragraph, story or poem. She added that for the first two days of the lesson plan, she would read and the learners will follow sentence by sentence. Asked about what she thought about think, pair, share, she indicated, *“It has two ways sometimes it works and on another day it does not. There are learners who would disrespect those kept in charge while group activities are done and, in some instances, I find other groups of learners co-operating with their team leaders hence I am saying it can work in two folds.”*

#### 5.3.2.6 Assessment

Asked to define assessment, participant #2 said *“Assessment is the way of measuring the learners’ understanding after teaching and learning has taken place. This should be done by giving learners the activities to write either formally or informally. Not only can these activities be undertaken through written form, but they can also be orally done.”* When asked how she catered for the progressed learners when designing the E-FAL assessment activities, participant #2 said that she followed the annual teaching plan to assess all learners in her class, but corrections of written activities were used to address the gaps identified. She said that when doing corrections with the class, she emphasised all the items that she had noted that learners had not achieved.

Asked how she did that, she indicated that she taught those items again in trying to ensure that all learners grasped the learning content more effectively than before. She said, *“Sometimes it is very difficult to diagnose the challenges of the progressed learners because they do not speak during the lesson and it is through written activities that you will realize that some learners did not understand you properly hence correctional activities are more effective to me in E-FAL.”* Responding to the common challenges regarding teaching

E-FAL to the progressed learners, participant #2 indicated that sometimes progressed learners did not complete their activities or did not write at all and they needed constant supervision.

She added that overcrowded classes, shortage of furniture which eventually led to learners packed in threes at one table or desk, shortage of teaching and learning aids, and lack of parental involvement in the learning process of their children were hindrances. She said, *“Most of the parents of the progressed learners are not keen to know what is happening in the learning process of their children because, whenever we call them the only consistent parents consistent in showing up to the open days and parents meetings called at school are those of learners who are actually performing than those of the progressed learners.”*

Participant #2 was asked how she provided feedback of the E-FAL assessment to the progressed learners, she indicated that it was difficult to isolate the progressed learners during the correction activities because not only did they encounter challenges, but the rest of the class sometimes showed a lack understanding through wrong answers provided and she had to address those challenges. When asked about the strategies in place to enhance the performance of progressed learners in E-FAL, she said that she gave learners spelling activities on Fridays from the words covered during the week to improve their vocabulary and she remained with them after school for at least thirty minutes two or three times a week.

### **5.3.3 Participant #3**

#### **5.3.3.1 Biography**

Participant #3 was a female teacher and a Departmental Head at primary school B situated in a village. Responding to the question of her teaching experience, she indicated that she had been teaching for the previous seven years and had the experience of working at the assessment unit before coming to teach. When she was asked about her teaching qualifications, she indicated that she held a Diploma in Multimedia, BA Communications, Post Graduate Certificate in Education and an Honours Degree in Management which she

had recently acquired. On the issue of subject specialisation, participant #3 said that she specialised in English in her PGCE. Responding to the subjects that she taught, she said that she taught Life Skills to grade four and E-FAL in grade six. When asked if there was any other subject that she taught in any other grade, she indicated that she also taught Life Skills in grade six and had the responsibility of supervising eight teachers teaching E-FAL and Setswana from grades four to seven.

#### **5.3.3.2 Teaching approaches**

When participant #3 was asked about the teaching approaches suitable for the teaching of the progressed learners, she concurred with what participant #1 said with her preference for the differentiated teaching approach. She said, *“The differentiated teaching has worked for me over the years although sometimes it has some elements of delay I prefer it the most because it is the teaching approach in which all learners of different cognitive levels may be reached with correct application thereof.”* When asked to support her choice of the teaching approach, participant #3 also added: *“With differentiated teaching, learners are able to do different activities from the same context but all building towards the same goal.”*

#### **5.3.3.3 Theories**

Participant #3 worked in a school that did not have a library. Although they improvised a library corner, the availability of reading books in that corner was still a challenge. She said: *“Every class is supposed to have a library corner, but corner due to overcrowding in our classes we find it very difficult to create that space as we as teachers cannot move in between the lines in class due to this overcrowding.”* When asked about the theories that underpinned the teaching of the progressed learners, participant #3 indicated that she preferred behaviourism and interactive learning theories. She outlined that it was important to first work on learner behaviour so that disruptions in the classroom during teaching may be minimized, and for that reason, behaviourism was the relevant learning theory. She further added that behaviourism made it standard for how the learners in her class conducted themselves. Regarding the interactive learning theory, she indicated that this

learning theory made it easier for her to come up with the correct diagnosis of her learners, in particular, the progressed learners. When asked to elaborate participant #3, added that when learners interacted with each other and with the teacher during the teaching and learning process, the teacher was, therefore, able to understand where the learners were struggling as individuals.

In addition to our discussion, Participant #3 indicated a problem regarding attending to the progressed learners as teachers did not have enough resources but circumstances had improved with the election of the new functional School-Based Support Team which had ensured support to the progressed learners.

#### **5.3.3.4 Challenges**

When participant #3 was asked to indicate any challenges she had regarding teaching the progressed learners, she indicated that she had two grade six classes which were overcrowded, a shortage of teaching and learning aids, a shortage of school furniture, lack of parental involvement and recognition of learners' efforts and disinterested learners. She said, *"Our learners are overcrowded in class, currently I have one hundred and twenty-two learners in two classes that I teach and moving in between the lines to attend those at the back is always difficult and most of the learners disrupting the class are those sitting at the back of which some are the progressed learners"* Participant #3 complained that when parents were requested to sign the learners' books, most of the books come back to school not checked or signed by the parents.

Asked about whether she had enough teaching resources for the teaching of E-FAL, participant #3 said that teaching aids and learning at school were available, but not enough to address the challenges experienced by the progressed learners. She said, *"We have teaching aids, but I just wish that they were relevant to the teaching of the progressed learners because they are the ones that are suffering the most in terms of understanding and comprehending the learning content."*

Participant #3 was asked to indicate the resources she would like for the effective teaching of E-FAL, she indicated charts with phonics and phonemes. She also indicated that pictures were the most important resource for the teaching of the progressed learners.

Responding to the question of the external factors that impeded the teaching of E-FAL to the progressed learners, participant #3 made mention of the lack participation and involvement of parents in the learning of their children and the illiteracy of the parents. When asked to explain, she said, *“English is a language that needs continuous interaction and when learners do not see a single document written in English at home or do not speak it at all with anyone after school, the teacher has to move a little behind every day to bridge the gap, so yes this is an impeding factor to the teaching of E-FAL.”*

#### **5.3.3.5 Teaching strategies**

Participant #3 said when responding to the question of whether she had teaching strategies in place to enhance the teaching of the progressed learners, that she made mention that she had written a curriculum report in which she outlined the challenges of her progressed learners and that she remained behind with them in groups for remedial tuition. She said, *“I have written a curriculum report which we write every first term and in it, I outlined the details of what I have observed in every learner and in particular the progressed learners and how I intend to assist them. I grouped my learners according to the similarity of their challenges and will assist them every day after school, however, it is always a challenge because some of them do not honour this arrangement because I struggle to keep them together after school.”*

Responding to how she applied the think, pair, share strategy of teaching, participant #3 said that she grouped her learners according to groups and during the group work activities she moved around all the groups and guided them whenever she felt they get lost.

#### **5.3.3.6 Assessment**

When participant #3 was asked how she defined the term assessment, she said the assessment was the measurement that she used to check how far learners had understood the learning content. Asked how he catered for the progressed learners in E-FAL when designing the assessment activities, participant #3 made mention that she designed her assessment activities according to how the annual teaching plan requires her to do. She said, *“Designing the assessment activities for the progressed learners is not an easy task because they come with different challenges, but I use the corrections more to address the challenges of the progressed learners.”*

When participant #3 was asked about the challenges regarding assessing the progressed learners she indicated that the most common challenge in assessing the progressed learners is that they usually did not complete their assessment activities. Asked about how she gave feedback to the of E-FAL to the progressed learners, participant #3 said that she gave feedback by writing it on the chalkboard the following day after the activity was completed. Responding to the question of whether she had any other strategies to enhance the teaching of E-FAL to the progressed learners, she indicated that she had a separate book in which the progressed learners were given remedial activities and that when corrections were done in class, the progressed learners were given the same activities again to see whether they would improve after correction.

#### **5.3.4 Participant #4**

##### **5.3.4.1 Biography**

Participant #4 was a female teacher working in primary school B in the village. Asked about her teaching qualification, she indicated that she held a Senior Primary Teachers Diploma and an Accredited Certificate in Education (ACE) Life Orientation. Responding to the specialisation of subjects, she said that she had specialising in English and Sepedi throughout her primary school teaching. When asked about her teaching experience she

indicated that she had been teaching for the previous eight years. Pertaining to the subjects she then taught, she indicated that she taught English in grade six and Life Skills to the grade four learners.

#### **5.3.4.2 Teaching approaches**

When participant #4 was asked about the teaching approaches suitable for the teaching of E-FAL to the progressed learners in grade six, she indicated that the best approach was the lecture method coupled with the conceptual grouping. When asked what conceptual grouping was, she said, *"It is the method I use in which I usually group concepts from the story or the paragraph that I will use to teach the learning content for that week or two. I explain all the concepts and difficult words before going through the story so that learners should know what they mean before we use to read them."* She said that this made it a lot easier because learners were then able to digest the learning much easier than when she started going through the story without explaining these concepts. Asked what she understood about the process approach, she indicated, *"Process Approach was an opposite of product approach where the teacher was excited about the learners narrating the learning content without understanding whether they understand what they were narrating or not."* She further said, *"With Process, Approach teaching is treated as a process of ensuring that learners do understand and can apply themselves on the learning content that they just learned."*

#### **5.3.4.3 Theories**

When participant #4 was asked which learning theory underpinned the teaching of the progressed learners, she said *"Teaching the progressed learners requires the teacher to thoroughly interact with her learners, because this interaction shows the teacher the gaps that are existing which you might not have been aware of when the lesson started. I, therefore, believe that the teaching of the progressed learners should be underpinned by the interactive learning theory as it allows for the learner-centered approach like the Outcomes Based Education requires of us."* Participant #4 concurred with both participants

#1 and #3 about the usefulness of the learner-centered approach, however, she believed that teachers should interact more with the learners during the teaching and learning process.

#### **5.3.4.4 Challenges**

Participant #4 was asked whether she had any challenges regarding teaching the progressed learners in grade six and she indicated that she had plenty of challenges. She said, *“There are plenty of challenges that I experience as a teacher and it saddens me as these challenges affect the progressed learners more than any other learner or teacher. Learners in my grade six class are congested they are overcrowded and there is also a shortage of furniture for the learners in my grade six class...on top of the challenges that I raised above sometimes I feel like I am alone in this situation as the parents of these learners will not show up whenever I call them. The only parents who are consistent with the meetings called at the school are those of the learners who are giving me good results than those of the struggling learners.”*

Participant #4 also added the shortage of teaching aids relevant to the progressed learners was a major challenge. When asked about the teaching resources, she would like to have for effective teaching of the progressed learners, she indicated that she would have liked to have more pictures and vocabulary charts.

#### **5.3.4.5 Teaching strategies**

Participant #4 was asked about the teaching strategies in place to enhance the teaching of the progressed learners in E-FAL, she indicated that she grouped her learners according to the cognitive levels and that she used pictures to translate the learning content. She said, *“I have grouped my learners according to their level of understanding, but each group is allocated a leader who is a little faster than the rest of the group members and if teaching aids relevant to the progressed learners like pictures can be made available, I will use them to simplify the learning content by demonstrating my teaching.”* Participant #4 also outlined



that she was trying hard to encourage learners to learn in their own style and pace although not many of them responded positively.

When asked about think, pair, share strategy of teaching, she indicated that she was trying it already, but it required learners to be committed to taking part in the activities. *“Think, pair, share, strategy of teaching is the strategy that first requires learners to show mutual respect to each other because if they do not, some of the learners will not become confident in voicing out their thoughts and thus makes the diagnosis of learners difficult, because you do not know what they think as a teacher. It is actually the strategy that I like hence I have divided my learners into smaller groups between four and six learners in each group.”*

#### **5.3.4.6 Assessment**

When asked to define the term assessment, participant #4 said, *“Assessment is a way of measuring learners’ understanding through giving them activities after teaching and learning has taken place. This can be done in the form of formal or informal activities, oral or written as long as the teacher can measure whether what was actually taught was learned to the maximum.”* Asked how she catered for progressed learners when designing the assessment activities for E-FAL, she said that progressed learners were taken step by step through reading activities and during writing all learners were given the same activities; however, the progressed learners were given the opportunity to redo the activity after it had been done and further clarities were given to them.

When asked of the challenges regarding assessing E-FAL with the progressed learners, she indicated that the major challenge was that most progressed learners could not read independently and therefore they could not read and comprehend on their own. Other challenges raised by this participant were the shortage of school furniture, overcrowding in class, learners did not complete their work and parents were not involved in learners’ school work. Responding to how she gave feedback to the progressed learners on E-FAL, participant #4 said that every informal activity is written was corrected with the entire class and progressed learners attended after school to emphasise the feedback that was done

during the E-FAL period. Asked about other strategies employed to enhance the performance of the progressed learners in grade six, she mentioned that she remained with the progressed learners after schools and addressed their individual challenges. She also wrote sentences on the board which they were supposed to transcribe and a dictation or spelling test was given to them every week.

### **5.3.5 Participant #5**

#### **5.3.5.1 Biography**

Participant #5 was a male teacher teaching in a primary school B situated in a village. He held a Secondary Teachers Diploma which he acquired in 1996. When asked about his teaching experience, participant #5 indicated that he had been teaching for the previous eight years. Responding to the question of specialisation of subjects, he indicated that he specialised in English, Sepedi and Natural Sciences. Asked if the subject he was currently teaching, participant #5 said that he was teaching E-FAL in grade six, Technology in grade seven and Life Skills in grade five.

#### **5.3.5.2 Teaching approaches**

When participant #5 was asked about the teaching approaches that he thought were suitable for teaching progressed learners, he indicated that progressed learners needed learner-centered and teacher-centered teaching approaches. He said, *“Although teaching progressed learners requires learner-centered approaches I believe that in using the lecture method because teachers are the major sources of information in the classroom and therefore for the lesson to be learner-centered, learners need to be equipped with information first before seeking them to interact with you or the lesson.”* Participant #5 said if the lecture method was applied properly, it could yield more effective results for the school through the progressed learners.

When asked to give reasons for the teaching approach he indicated above, participant #5 said learners should first be given solid information by the teacher before the latter could ask them about the content. He said *“teachers must invest knowledge and information in the learners before they (teachers) may come to withdraw from them (learners).* He added, *“When teaching learners, you must know that you teach them because there is a specific information or knowledge you want to acquaint them with and when you ask question in an informal or formal activity you are now withdrawing, that is it is important for learners to see teachers as sources of information and for teachers to apply themselves properly when teaching the progressed learners and other learners at large.”* When asked what he understood about the process approach, participant # 5 said, *“Process Approach is a new teaching approach opposite of the Product Approach which was used in the past where learners would narrate a poem without understanding whereas with process approach learners are processed from the beginning to the end of the lesson and can explain every part of language that appears from the written text.”*

#### **5.3.5.3 Theories**

When asked which learning theory underpins the teaching of the progressed learners, participant #5 said that it required the learner-centered and the interactive approaches, because progressed learners had difficulty understanding within the time frames of the composite time tables. Therefore, interaction and application of learner-centeredness should not be time-bound but be bound by learners’ development of understanding. Responding to the question about the benefits of the learning theory mentioned above, participant #5 said that when learners’ understanding was not time-bound, learners were free to interact with the teacher and vice versa. This was done best when teachers were attending learners at a time which was not on the composite time table (i.e., after school or during break time).

#### **5.3.5.4 Challenges**

Responding to whether participant #5 had challenges regarding teaching the progressed learners, he said, *“Not all progressed learners get progressed because they are cannot comprehend, but some are progressed because they lack support from home and this is to be a major challenge. Other challenges are classes that enrolled overcapacity and the teacher is expected to produce one hundred percent of good results is a challenge. Lack of furniture like learners’ chairs and table makes the writing activities difficult for the learners and time consuming for the teacher is a challenge”* he added.

Asked whether he had enough resources to enhance the teaching of the progressed learners, participant #5 lamented that teaching resources at the school where he worked were too scarce to address the challenges of the progressed learners. When asked to indicate the teaching resources that he would like to have for effective teaching of the progressed learners, participant #5 indicated reading aids like library books with pictures, charts which assisted with the building of words from the beginning and illustrated language charts.

Responding to the question of external factors that impeded the success of teaching E-FAL to the progressed learners, participant #5 said: *“Teaching English requires learners who are somehow followed up on their schoolwork at home, but learners who do not interact with English outside the school and only interact with it here at school takes longer to improve than the ones who continuously have something about English in her everyday life.”* Participant #5 continued, *“I am referring to these as external factors because some of the parents have the interest to assist their children and school, but unfortunately they cannot read nor write therefore even when you give a progressed learner an activity to complete at home you know that the poor learner is going to be on his/her own.”*

#### **5.3.5.5 Teaching strategies**

When participant #5 was asked whether he had any teaching strategies in place to enhance the teaching and learning of E-FAL in the grade six progressed learners, he responded and

said that he had designed phonic charts and words to assist learners with the building blocks of words. He used them to teach the progressed learners about sounds and interacted with them practically where everyone was given an opportunity to touch, pronounce and build three to five words. He added, *“When learners see, touch and pronounce phonics, it makes it easier for me to diagnose whether the learner has a challenge in pronouncing or building the word.”*

Participant #5 also said that he had allocated all his progressed learners separate exercise books in which their remedial activities were written. *“I gave each one of them an exercise in which they will do our activities separate from the class workbooks but I allowed them to use them for homework so that they may not be confused, they practice in that book, write spelling tests and re-write activities which were corrected as a classwork after it was erased just to observe whether they managed to grab something out of the corrected activity.”*

Asked what he thought about the think, pair, share strategy of teaching, participant #5 said that this strategy was not consistent because it depended on the mood of the learners on the day. He said, *“Sometimes it works, when learners who are supposed to be the source are in good mood and on the other day it causes disruption in class, on the contrary, can be the targeted progressed learners who would not co-operate, and my major challenge is that the more time lost, the bigger the loss for the progressed learners.”* He added, *“It is a good strategy when I only use it during the time at which I remain behind with the progressed learners, at that time I have seen good results from this teaching strategy.”*

#### **5.3.5.6 Assessment**

When asked how he defines the term assessment, participant #5 said an assessment is when learners are given activities after teaching and learning had taken place to see how much they understood the teacher. He also indicated two different forms of assessment, formal and informal assessment. Asked how he catered for progressed learners when designing assessment activities, he said, *“It is difficult to design assessment activities for the progressed learners before teaching, I usually set the informal assessment activities*

*relating to the topic to be treated for the whole class as standard assessment for all learners. As for the progressed learners' activities relevant to them will be determined by how they perform in a particular activity.*" Responding to common challenges regarding assessing the progressed learners he said that the most common challenge was that majority if not all the progressed learners when writing either formal or informal assessment in E-FAL, they did not understand the instructions and they were expected to write that assessment. *"The challenge is that we give them a text to read and know that they cannot read but we expect them to write that activity."*

Another challenge raised by participant #5 was the lack of adequate learning space, shortage of school furniture and three learners sitting at a table for two. He also indicated that during an assessment, the teacher must constantly check all learners when writing the activity. If this was not done, when the period lapsed and books were collected, the teacher was apt to notice that some learners had not been doing the assessment activity. Participant #5 further added the shortage of teaching and learning aids relevant to the teaching of the progressed learners.

Responding to how he gave feedback to the progressed learners, participant #5 indicated that he had no specific schedule for giving feedback to the progressed learners, but all learners were given feedback at the same time; however, interaction with the progressed learners took place after school. Asked whether there were any other teaching strategies to enhance the teaching of the progressed learners, he indicated that his major strategy was to use correction for remediation and to teach the progressed learners separately after school depending on how well they responded to the after-school sessions.

### **5.3.6 Participant #6**

#### **5.3.6.1 Biography**

Participant #6 was a male teacher at primary school A, situated in the township. He held a Bachelors' degree in Secondary Education, Higher Education Diploma and an Accredited

Certificate in Education, English Teaching. When asked about his number of years of teaching experience, he indicated that he had been teaching for thirteen years. Asked of his subjects of specialisation he said that he specialised in English and Setswana. Responding to the subject he was currently teaching, he said that he taught both English and Life Skills in grade six. When asked if there was any other subject that he taught, he said that he also taught Technology in grade seven.

#### **5.3.6.2 Teaching approaches**

When participant #6 was asked about suitable teaching approaches for teaching the progressed learners, he indicated that the most suitable teaching approach for the progressed learner was teaching proficiency through reading and storytelling. Asked to give reasons for this approach, he indicated that this method of teaching involved conveying events in words, images, and sounds which ultimately aroused learners' interests to keep concentrating throughout the duration of the lesson. When participant #6 was asked what he understood about the process approach, he said that he believed that the process approach had to do with teaching learners according to individual deficiencies and not as a class.

#### **5.3.6.3 Theories**

Participant #6 was asked which theories underpinned the teaching of the progressed learners, he said that the social constructivist and the behaviourist learning theories underpinned the teaching of the progressed learners. Asked about the benefits, he said *"The social constructivist learning theory affords each individual learner an opportunity to learn at his/her pace since teaching and learning are learner-centered. The teaching approaches will, therefore, be learner-centered. On the other hand, the behaviourist learning theory affords the teacher to work on individual learner's behaviour and ensures that only desirable is rewarded."* Participant #6 also said that he believed that for teaching and learning to be successful for progressed learners, the behaviour of the learners in class

should be taken to cognisance and bad behaviour corrected so that they could learn independently.

#### **5.3.6.4 Challenges**

Responding to whether he had any challenges regarding teaching progressed learners in grade six, participant #6 indicated overcrowded classes, learners who did not complete their assessment activities, learner absenteeism, parents who were not involved, shortage of furniture and teaching and learning aids. Asked whether he had enough resources to teach E-FAL to the progressed learners, participant #6 said, *“We have resources at school but to say they are enough for teaching the progressed learners I cannot say that because all the resources that we have at are for learners learning at the standard level.”*

When asked to indicate some teaching resources that he would like to have for effective teaching of the progressed learners, he said: *“For the effect of the progressed learners there is a need for pictures that will assist to translate the meaning of what teacher is saying, I also intend to have phonics and sentences translated in pictures on the charts, but sometimes it is just too difficult to get resources that would assist as progressed learners’ challenges every day.”* Responding to the external factors that impeded the success of teaching E-FAL to the progressed learners, he said that there were different factors, but the most important was lack of parental involvement, non-completion of class works and homework by the progressed learners. He added that learners who were habitually absent also formed part of the external factors because they delayed progress.

#### **5.3.6.5 Teaching strategies**

Participant #6 was asked whether he had any teaching strategy in place for the teaching of E-FAL to the progressed learners in grade six and he said that the most important thing was their poor English proficiency. He added, *“The gap between the progressed learners in my class and their grade is huge, I had to first establish their challenges which I have written down and the strategy now requests those with the founding competencies to assist*



*where possible. I am reading short paragraphs with them every week and they transcribe in on Fridays with the hope that will make a difference.”*

Asked how he applied to think, pair, share strategy in teaching lesson in grade six, he said it was employed, but it was hindered by poor writing skills and poor spelling of most progressed learners which were below the grade six level. He said, *“As things stand I am more concerned with what I am measured with. When specialists visit me, they want to see learners who can read and write hence my concentration is more on those two aspects of learning i.e. reading and writing.”*

#### **5.3.6.6 Assessment**

When asked how he would define the term assessment, participant #6 outlined assessment as the way of measuring whether what was taught was learned. Asked how he catered for the progressed learners when designing the assessment activities, he indicated that he separated the activities from the lesson plan. He said, *“When setting questions from the written text testing the learners’ comprehension skills, I include the progressed learners by reading the story with them again while others are writing. We read the story sentence by sentence from the beginning.”*

Responding to the question about challenges regarding assessing the progressed learners, participant #6 mentioned the difficulty of preparing the type of questions which they should answer when he knew how much they were struggling. He added, *“When I prepare an assessment activity for the class, it is time-consuming because sometimes I will have differentiated these according to levels and sometimes I do not achieve my actual objective.”* Asked how he continued, he said, *“Because sometimes as a teacher what you think you know about learners might be wrong.”*

Participant #6 also said that another challenge regarding assessing the progressed learners was that he had to monitor them until they completed the activity and this did not assist them as far as tasks like examinations were concerned where they were expected

to be independent. Asked how he gave feedback to the progressed learners, he indicated that feedback was given in the form of corrections after books were marked or question by question with the rest of the class. He continued, *“When we do correction as a class I do not just ask questions and write answers on the chalkboard, I explain question by question to clarify those who got it wrong in classwork or homework.”* Asked whether there were any strategies that he employed to enhance the performance of the progressed learners in E-FAL, he said that his basic strategy at that point was to ensure that the progressed learners could read on their own. He remained with them after school in groups of three so that he could give them the necessary attention. He also indicated that he gave them a lot of transcription so that they became familiar with the words. He read the word and they wrote it so that they knew how to pronounce it in the future.

#### **5.4 NON-PARTICIPATORY OBSERVATION**

MacFarlan, 2017 defined non-participatory observation as an observation where the researcher observed the participants without actively participating in their activities. The researcher visited the sampled participants and observed how they taught E-FAL to grade six progressed learners. The observation was done during normal teaching and learning hours with the permission of the participants and their principals and the observation lasted for the duration of thirty minutes per session. Only teachers who were teaching E-FAL in grade six classes with progressed learners were observed.

Before this exercise took place, the researcher had made the participants aware of this activity during the interviews and participants gave consent to this exercise. Participants were made aware that this exercise will be conducted solemnly for data collection purpose and the researcher would not interfere in the lesson in any way. The researcher observed while the participants were teaching during the English First Additional Language period and used an audio device to capture the proceedings taking place during teaching and learning, an exercise which the participants were well aware of. At the same time, the researcher took notes on how learners behaved and interacted with the teacher during the lesson. The researcher also observed and took notes on how the participant interacted with

the entire class, which side served as the major source of answers and how well inclusivity was applied to learners who appeared to be slow learners or progressed learners.

The sole objective of the researcher was to observe without necessarily being involved, but notes were taken during the lesson presentation. The researcher engaged in the non-participatory observation to determine whether relevant methods and teaching strategies were used while teaching the progressed learners together with other learners and to verify whether challenges indicated by the participants during the interviews were as evident as was stated. After observation, the researcher compared his notes with the notes taken during the interviews. Non-participatory observation feedback for all six participants is highlighted below.

#### **5.4.1 Participant #1**

##### **5.4.1.1 Teaching approach**

During the non-participatory observation, participant #1 gave an English lesson to the learners in grade six class. The researcher observed that participant #1 used the lecture method to approach the lesson. The lecture method was coupled with some demonstrations as she tried to explain the new words to the learners. The teaching approach used attempted to cover all learners of different cognitive levels through questions asked and code switching during teaching. Participant #1 tried to accommodate the progressed learners during teaching, but the participation of the progressed learners was not satisfactory.

##### **5.4.1.2 Theories**

Participant #1 used the lecture method; however, the interaction between the teacher and the learners showed the application of interactive learning theory. Learners were involved through probing; even when the lecture method was dominant, the lesson was learner-centered. Learner involvement was implemented by asking learners a few questions before

the lesson was presented and after the presentation of the lesson, learners were asked questions and interacted with the learning content.

#### **5.4.1.3 Challenges**

Participant #1 did not have adequate resources to teach the progressed learners, only textbooks and the policy documents were used. There were no other resources used to assist the progressed learners to comprehend the learning content. The walls were not print-rich to assist the progressed learners with incidental reading. The learners were overcrowded in the class and the teacher's movement to the back of the room and in between the rows was restricted.

#### **5.4.1.4 Teaching strategies**

During that presentation, learners were paired on the tables and the teacher used scaffolding strategy through leading the learners e.g. when a question was asked, and learners got stuck the teacher would guide the learners who would then complete the sentence. This happened when the teacher wanted learners to explain the part of a plant in their home language and she showed them through the window and the learners were able to answer the question.

#### **5.4.1.5 Assessment**

Participant #1 did not have an assessment plan, the only document on an assessment file that participant #1 had was the Programme of Assessment. Participant #1 used both diagnostic and formative assessments to assess her learners. Learners were asked questions in between the lesson to see whether they understood and to conduct an in-process evaluation. Different forms of assessment were used by participant #1, first learners were asked questions before the actual lesson started to assess their prior-knowledge and formative assessment was given to the learners in the form of classwork.

Feedback to learners was given promptly as the learners' books indicated that were marked and the correction was done with learners in the previous activities.

The teacher portfolio for participant #1 had assessment records of learners both handwritten and from the SA-SAMS system that was used by the school and the Department of Education. The researcher had observed individual assessment given to learners and not in pairing or group work. The class workbooks did not show signs of differentiation however the progressed learners did have separate activity books that they used for remediation activities.

#### **5.4.2 Participant #2**

##### **5.3.2.1 Teaching approaches**

During the non-participant observation, the researcher observed that participant #2 used the lecture method. She approached the learners by asking questions from the previous lesson and learners were involved through answering the oral questions asked. The teacher then gradually built her lesson from the prior-knowledge of the learners and linked it with the new topic. The lecture method was used to approach learners. Participant #2 used her movements to attract learners' attention through moving around though she was restricted by lack of space.

##### **5.4.2.2 Theories**

The researcher observed the use of the interactive learning theory where the teacher interacted with her learners and used the lecture method. The non-participatory observation helped the researcher to determine that the correct use and application of the lecture method could produce good results in teaching. The researcher also observed that, despite how hard the teacher tried to apply herself in this presentation, the progressed learners still showed some gaps when questions were asked in relation to the topic just taught. The researcher further determined through the non-participatory observation that

interactive learning theory needed to be more learner-centered as this would have assisted with a more effective diagnosis of all learners, in particular, the progressed learners. The researcher also observed that there was a list of parents who were invited to the open days but most parents did not sign the books used to capture the attendance of the parents.

#### **5.4.2.3 Challenges**

During the non-participatory observation, the researcher observed the challenge of a lack of teaching and learning resources. The learning space was not adequate and not favourable for the conducive teaching of the progressed learners. The class was overcrowded, and the movement of the teacher was impeded by the closely packed tables in the classrooms. At some point, learners were disruptive and did not pay attention to the teacher while some were throwing some items around.

#### **5.4.2.4 Teaching strategies**

Non-participatory-observation helped the researcher to determine that participant #2 used different teaching strategies to assist and approach the learners in her class. The learners in this class were paired in twos and threes at each table according to the cognitive levels. The teacher used the information recall method to measure the learners' understanding. The progressed learners had intervention activities that were written and marked by another teacher. This was evident because of the signature that was most frequent in the learners' books. Participant #2 also used corrections to address the gaps she identified in the learners during teaching. Correction of items in the activity was written on the chalkboard and the teacher would explain and repeat herself, thereafter the correct answer would be written on the chalkboard.

#### **5.4.2.5 Assessment**

The researcher observed that participant #2 did not have an assessment plan. The teacher used the same questions to assess the learners informally while the progressed were

struggling to respond to the questions. Formative assessment was employed regularly and the feedback to learners was on time and insightful. The researcher used the same classwork to re-assess the progressed learners after these activities had been corrected in class. Oral questions were also asked to prepare learners for the formative activities.

### **5.4.3 Participant #3**

#### **5.4.3.1 Teaching approaches**

Participant #3 used the functional method through the oral approach. Learners were approached through the previous activity to correct them. The teacher tried to employ situational language teaching seeking to accommodate all learners in the class including the progressed learners. Even though these methods were applied, they were not addressing learners of different cognitive levels, because at times learners were expected to construct sentences that the progressed learners in this class struggled with. Participant #3 tried to accommodate the progressed learners in how she prepared her lesson. The lesson plan showed a learner-centered approach, however, the challenge was that the learners were expected to take part right away from the beginning of the lesson which left the progressed learners vulnerable.

#### **5.4.3.2 Theories**

Despite the challenges encountered during the lesson presentation, the approach of the lesson was learner-centered which involved most learners actively. The lesson showed an interactive approach between the teacher and the learners including the progressed learners. The lesson had more learner dominant activities like discussions and demonstrations at times; however, some of these activities were limited to some groups of learners of certain cognitive levels like the progressed learners especially in discussion activities. Learner involvement was implemented to the benefit of learners by using learner weaknesses and strengths to design the lesson plan. The lesson plan was balanced in that

it had different activities aimed at different cognitive levels, for example, discussions for the gifted learners and the demonstrations for learners of different cognitive levels.

#### **5.4.3.3 Challenges**

During the non-participatory observation, the researcher observed that participant #3 did not have adequate teaching and learning aids especially those favourable for the teaching of the progressed learners. The learners were only reliant on the textbook and the teacher as the sources of information, which, in the opinion of the researcher, was more beneficial to the gifted learners than the progressed learners. The learning space was minimal; learners were overcrowded in the class, some sitting in threes at a table for two and the teacher's movement in between the tables was limited. The learning space was not favourable for the progressed learners as the writing skills of the learners could not be properly diagnosed, among others.

#### **5.4.3.4 Teaching strategies**

The learners in this class were paired, but the intention of assisting the progressed learners was not evident because immediately after teaching, learners were asked similar questions and discussions were held. At some point, the think, pair, share strategy was employed coupled with the reciprocal teaching where the learners were divided into smaller groups for discussions with one taking the leading role. Progressed learners in all these activities appeared uncertain as they could not express themselves during the discussion and it was not clear how the teacher planned to include the progressed learners.

#### **5.4.3.5 Assessment**

The teacher did not have an assessment plan. However, there was a subject programme of assessment for the formal tasks in the teacher portfolio and the questions for the classwork activities and rubrics for observations during discussions were available. Participant #3 used classroom assessment activities to diagnose whether learners



understood or not. Classroom learning activities were given in the form of both diagnostic and formative assessment. Learners took part and the teacher assessed, observed and came up with a diagnosis. Feedback to learners was not given promptly; some activities were not marked for a long time. The researcher also observed that the teacher portfolio had learners' records of assessment which were manually written and those printed from the South African Schools Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS).

During the non-participatory observation, the researcher observed the assessment given to learners in the form of small groups where group discussions were held. Learner assessment showed some signs of differentiation as some learners discussed with others listening and the leader learned skills through assuming the leading role.

#### **5.4.4 Participant #4**

##### **5.4.4.1 Teaching approaches**

The researcher observed that participant #4 approached the lesson through guided reading. The teacher read the sentence and learners then read after the teacher. After reading the text the teacher continued to present the lesson using the lecture method from the text that was read. She used only two resources: the textbook and the chalkboard. Progressed learners did not benefit from the two teaching approaches (i.e., lecture method and guided reading). From the outset, only learners who could recognize words benefitted from guided reading; the progressed learners were still struggling with recognition of phonics.

##### **5.4.4.2 Theories**

Despite the challenges that the teacher encountered during teaching and learning, she encouraged an environment in which learners interacted with her, their peers and the content. The mutual interaction among learners when they tried to assist each other especially during guided reading was striking and showed an environment that was

interactive with the learners at the central part of teaching and learning. The learning theory in this class was interactive with a learner-centered approach.

#### **5.4.4.3 Challenges**

The teacher did not have adequate resources to teach the progressed learners in her class. She had only a few charts which were more suitable for gifted learners who were capable of succeeding in the teaching and learning process. The class was overcrowded. Therefore, there was not enough space for conducive teaching and learning to take place, some learners were sitting in threes at a table for two.

#### **5.4.4.4 Teaching strategies**

Learners sat in twos and threes at the tables and they strove to assist each other especially during group guided reading. The researcher observed that the teaching strategy employed during teaching was information recall. The teacher often asked questions of recall, like who was that, name any two individuals, etc. The think pair, share strategy was also used to approach this lesson. However, the strategies used by the teacher did not cater for all the progressed learners in the class.

#### **5.4.4.5 Assessment**

During the non-participatory observation, the researcher did not observe any plan for assessment in the lesson plan and the teacher portfolio, however, the programme of assessment from SA-SAMS was available in the teacher portfolio. An Area Office informal assessment guide assisted the teacher with the number of assessments required per term. The researcher observed that the work given to the learners in this class was not individual but group work. Learners were asked to read as a group and they assisted each other with the pronunciation of words. Feedback was not given to the learners on time; most of the class workbooks had not been marked for a long time. The researcher observed assessment records in the form of mark sheets that were controlled and the mark sheets

printout from SASAMS. The learners' assessment did not show elements of differentiated teaching and learning.

#### **5.4.5 Participant #5**

##### **5.4.5.1 Teaching approaches**

During the non-participatory observation, the researcher observed participant #5 approaching the learners in an inclusive way. Learners listened to an article read by the teacher. He then translated it for the learners who did not understand the text. The teaching approach covered most learners in the class. The teacher accommodated the progressed learners in a sense that he read for the entire class and translated where the progressed learners did not understand.

##### **5.4.5.2 Theories**

The teacher used the interactive learning theory to approach the learners. This was observed in how the teacher interacted with the learners during the lesson presentation. The teacher used the lecture method, but the lesson presentation was learner-centered. The teacher translated the text as a way of involving all the learners.

##### **5.4.5.3 Challenges**

The learners were overcrowded in the class and it was very difficult for the teacher to move in between the rows. The resources that the teacher used for lesson presentation was minimal. There were no resources that were relevant to assist the progressed learners. The learning space in this class was not conducive to the teaching of the progressed learners. This hindered the correct diagnosis.

#### **5.4.5.4 Teaching strategies**

Some learners were sitting in threes at the tables for two. The teacher had a list of groups of learners according to their cognitive levels even though he highlighted that in each group, he had one learner who was the leader of the group. The teacher used the information recall strategy to approach this lesson which was evident in questioning. The teacher applied reciprocal teaching at the end of the lesson where learners were guided about how to go about their discussion. The latter strategy was not inclusive as the progressed learners could not engage in discussions because they were still struggling to build their language competency in both written and spoken form.

#### **5.3.5.5 Assessment**

The teacher did not have a school assessment plan, however, there was a programme of assessment in the teacher's portfolio but reserved for formal tasks. The teacher used texts to assess the learners' reading competency, but he did not have an instrument like a rubric to measure the competency of the learners. The assessment forms were both diagnostic and formative. Feedback on this activity could not be prompt and efficient as there was no instrument to measure learners' performance but the learners' informal activity books were marked with corrections done in most of the activities. Learner assessment records were kept in the teacher portfolio, both handwritten and those from SASAMS. Handwritten assessment records were controlled by the departmental head and printouts which were already moderated before capturing in SASAMS. The assessment was given per individual; all learners were expected to do the work on their own. Group work and pairing was not applied; the dominant way of assessing learners was through individual assessment. All assessment tasks given to the learners were the same.

#### **5.4.6 Participant #6**

##### **5.4.6.1 Teaching approaches**

The researcher observed that during the non-participatory observation the teacher used the lecture method to approach his learners. The method or approach used by the teacher did not address learners of different cognitive levels because during the presentation it was clear that the progressed learners were struggling to understand the teacher. This was evident when they failed to respond to the questions asked immediately after the lesson presentation. Progressed learners were not accommodated in the planning observed by the researcher.

##### **5.4.6.2 Theories**

The teacher used the behaviourist learning theory more than any other learning theory. He was more concerned about how learners behave in front of a visitor more than teaching effectively. The teacher did not use the learner-centered approach at all but rather used the lecture method which directed teaching and learning in this class. Learner involvement was implemented through an oral question and answer technique after the lesson was presented. The teaching approach used by the teacher did not benefit the progressed learners in this class.

##### **5.4.6.3 Challenges**

The researcher observed that participant #6 in grade six class at school A in the township did not have enough resources for the teaching of the progressed learners. There were only three resources available in this class: the teacher, chalkboard and textbooks. The resources like charts and other relevant teaching aids for the progressed learners were not available. There was inadequate learning space, more progressed learners in class than all other classes observed and an overcrowded classroom. Learner absenteeism was also a challenge raised by the teacher.

#### **5.4.6.4 Teaching strategies**

Learners in this grade six class were sitting in pairs, but they were not paired for the benefit of each other. The teacher used the lecture method to approach the learners and he asked questions after the lesson presentation to check whether learners understood the lesson. Information recall questions were the most dominant during this presentation.

#### **5.4.6.5 Assessment**

The teacher had no assessment plan but there was a programme of assessment available in the teacher portfolio and the learners' formal assessment books. The researcher observed that the teacher did not have an assessment plan for informal activities. The progressed learners were given classwork and homework activities to do; in addition, the progressed learners were allocated separate books in which they did the work relevant to them. Progressed learners were given prompt feedback and the teacher tried to communicate the performance of the learners in their books. The assessment was given to learners individually with little interaction or group activities. There was evidence of differentiated learning and the progressed learners were given separate activity books for remediation.

### **5.5 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

Bowen, 2016 outlined document analysis as a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic. Bowen further adds that document analysis incorporates coding the contents into themes similar to how focus groups or interview transcripts are analyzed.

The researcher went through the documents to find the actual deeper meaning of what was said and implied by the participants during data collection, especially during the interviews. Also important for the researcher was to ensure that participants had not brought personal bias to the study while they were responding to the questions during the interviews.

According to Bowen, 2009 a rubric may be used by the researcher to grade or score the contents of the documents, either presented by the participants as personal experiences, beliefs, journals or reflections.

Document analysis remained the sole responsibility of the researcher of this study to ensure that all the gaps were closed and the authenticity of the empirical findings were valid. The researcher saw this as a process in which data collected and documents presented were examined and synthesised in order to obtain accurate meaning from these documents. This was done through developing themes from the information gathered from the participants which were later broken into categories to enable the researcher to discuss the information item by item.

The main objective of this study was to explore the teachers' perspectives regarding teaching E-FAL to the progressed learners in grade six and based on this, the researcher had to analyse documents related to the teaching of E-FAL to the progressed learners in grade six. The following documents were required by the researcher for analysis: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for E-FAL; E-FAL Lesson Plans; Assessment Plans and activities; White paper six of 2001; National protocol for assessment; Subject school-based assessment policy; and NPPPR policy of the national curriculum statement, grade R-12. Document analysis is discussed as follows.

### **5.5.1 Participant #1**

#### **5.5.1.1 Policy documents**

Participant #1 was a female teacher teaching grade six at school A, sampled from the township. When analyzing her documents, the researcher observed that she had the subject policy document for E-FAL. Participant #1 also had the following policies available for guidance in the promotion of the learners, National Protocol for Assessment, National Policy pertaining to the Programme of Promotion Requirements, School-based subject policy, and School-based intervention.

#### **5.5.1.2 Lesson plans**

Participant #1 had the lesson plans which were up to the expected standard of E-FAL planning and the lesson plans had the assessment activities which were informal. By the expected lesson planning, the researcher implied that the lesson plan covered all components of the lesson that had to be covered during planning. These components among others included the planning for the learners' prior-knowledge, planning the informal activities to be written, expanded opportunities that were to be afforded to the learners, teacher, and reflection. The formal assessment activities were not available, but the date and form of formal tasks were indicated in the lesson plan. All learners were afforded expanded opportunities, both the progressed learners and the gifted.

#### **5.5.1.3 Assessment**

The school did not have a school assessment plan and the evidence of the progressed learners' assessment activities was available. The teacher allocated each progressed learner a separate activity booklet in which expanded opportunities were written. There was evidence of one form of assessment that intended to train the progressed learners to construct sentences. Progressed learners' activities were marked on time and they were given feedback, but the teacher did not keep records of the progressed learners' activities in her file.

#### **5.5.1.4 Teaching strategies**

Participant #1 paired learners at the tables and she used scaffolding strategy to lead the learners where they got stuck. She used the differentiated learning teaching strategy to interact with learners of different cognitive levels in her class and the learner-centered approach was employed in presenting the lesson.



## **5.5.2 Participant #2**

### **5.5.2.1 Policy documents**

Participant #2 was a female teacher teaching E-FAL in grade six in a primary school A. Documents analysed during her interaction with the researcher were CAPS Policy Statement for E-FAL and the policies related to the teaching of E-FAL. Policies analyzed were the NPA (2011) which was available and served as a guide of how learners should be assessed in this subject. NPPPR was also available to guide the teacher regarding notional time, the promotion requirements for learners in the intermediate phase and other phases. Participant #2 also had a Government Gazette 36042, 2012 as amended. Her teacher portfolio had the school subject policy, however, the school intervention policy was not available. Nonetheless, the teacher devised some means to ensure that the intervention activities were done in a separate book.

### **5.5.2.2 Lesson plans**

Participant #2 used the lesson plan template with all the components and made efforts to prepare a well-structured lesson plan for E-FAL. Each lesson plan entailed the assessment activities that were written by learners but did not specify whether they were for the progressed learners or not. However, the teacher prepared the activities for expanded opportunities during the lesson presentation. The lesson plan afforded the progressed learners with expanded opportunities, but this time the activities were presented after the lesson presentation.

### **5.5.2.3 Assessment**

The school did not have a school assessment plan but had a programme of assessment for E-FAL formal tasks activities and learners were given copies thereof. There was no evidence of a plan for assessment of the progressed learners, but the teacher used the corrections done in class to re-assess the progressed learners. Forms of assessment given

to the learners were in the form of classwork and the feedback to these activities was prompt and efficient. There was no evidence of learners' records in the teacher's file, however, the learners had an assessment booklet separate from the normal classwork book.

#### **5.5.2.4 Teaching strategies**

The teacher used the probing approach to engage learners in the lesson and she later introduced the topic of the cycle. The lesson was learner-centered, and learners were afforded a chance to interact with their peers especially regarding remediation activities. Correctional activities from the classwork were used to clarify questions that most progressed learners did not get correct. This was done to apply the School-Based intervention policy of school A.

#### **5.5.3 Participant #3**

##### **5.5.3.1 Policy documents**

Participant #3 was a female teacher and a Departmental Head at a primary school B situated in a village. Document analysis entailed the availability of the E-FAL Policy document in her file and the Manual Activities for Home Language, a CAPS Orientation for 2012. The two documents assisted the teacher with the teaching approaches, annual teaching plan, concepts for English language and notional times for preparing times allocated for English teaching. There were also progression policies documents which the researcher analysed: the NPA, Government Gazette 36042 as amended, NPPPR of the NCS. The purpose of these documents in the teacher portfolio was to assist the teacher with issues of promotion and progression of learners from grade to grade. The school-based subject policy and the intervention policy were not available. However separate booklets and templates in the intervention file contained activities of the progressed learners.

#### **5.5.3.2 Lesson plans**

Participant #3 had the lesson plan template which had all the components and the teacher prepared lesson plans which were the standard for the E-FAL. All lesson plans had assessment activities according to the topic that was treated for the duration of the lesson plan. The lesson plan afforded the progressed learners the expanded opportunities and the teacher used this component to address the challenges experienced by the progressed learners.

#### **5.5.3.3 Assessment**

The school did not have a school assessment plan, however, the teacher had the programme of assessment from the policy document in her portfolio. There was no evidence of assessment activities given to the progressed learners during teaching. All learners were given the same assessment activities, however, the teacher created time to address the challenges of the progressed learners outside normal teaching and learning time. The progressed learners were given classwork activities based on the previous classwork which was corrected. Marking of the books for the informal activities in this class was not satisfactory; feedback both on classwork activities and on the remediation activities took too long. Formal tasks were marked on time and the mark sheets were filed in two sets in the teacher's portfolio (e.g., handwritten and the SA-SAMS printout).

#### **5.5.3.4 Teaching strategies**

Participant #3 used the functional method through the oral approach. Learners were approached on the basis of the previous activity with corrections. The teacher employed the situational language teaching approach, thus seeking to accommodate all learners in the class including the progressed learners. The lesson plan was learner-centered and the progressed learners were accommodated in the lesson plan.

#### **5.5.4 Participant #4**

##### **5.5.4.1 Policy documents**

Participant #4 was a female teacher at primary school B situated in the village. The teacher had a copy of the policy document for E-FAL. She had also a monitoring tool which used to prepare herself prior to monitoring. Progression policies like NPA, NPPPR of the NCS, Regulation Gazette No. 9886. Vol.510 Gazette No. 36041 of December 2012 were all available in the teacher portfolio. The School-Based Subject policy and the Intervention Policy were not available in the teacher's portfolio.

##### **5.5.4.2 Lesson plans**

The teacher had a lesson plan template with all the components required when preparing for English teaching. The template was correctly filled with each component addressing its specific area. All participant #4's lesson plans had assessment activities and these activities were planned and arranged according to the topic and context addressed in that cycle. The lesson plan addressed the content as required and the teacher made provision for the progressed learners at the bottom corner of the lesson plan where it indicated the expanded opportunities.

##### **5.5.4.3 Assessment**

There was no assessment plan for the school at school B where participant #4 worked and the learners were not given intervention activities during normal teaching and learning time. Intervention activities were done at the time created by the teacher. Different activities were given to the progressed learners: a spelling test, classwork and other forms of formative and diagnostic activities. The activities which were given to the progressed learners were not marked on time and feedback for these activities did not serve the purpose of remediation. The teacher kept no evidence of the progressed learners in her file but all

progressed learners in her E-FAL class were allocated separate activity books that were not regularly marked.

#### **5.5.4.4 Teaching strategies**

Participant #4 used the lecture method and conceptual grouping through which learners were grouped to read as a group and concepts were clarified before reading. The lesson presentation was more teacher-centered than learner-centered. Thus it only partially met the needs of progressed learners.

#### **5.5.5 Participant #5**

##### **5.5.5.1 Policy documents**

Participant #5 was a male teacher, teaching at a primary school in school B. He had the E-FAL Policy document in his teacher portfolio from which he referred matters relating to the teaching of E-FAL. Participant #5 also had the promotion and progression policies in his portfolio which guided him regarding the promotion requirements of grade six learners regarding E-FAL. The promotion and progression policies available in the teacher's portfolio were NPA, NPPPR of the NCS including Regulation Gazette No. 9886. Vol.570 Gazette No. 36041 of December 2012. Participant #5 did not have the School-Based Subject Policy nor the Intervention Policy.

##### **5.5.5.2 Lesson plans**

The teacher had the correct E-FAL lesson plan template which he used to thoroughly prepare for the lessons. All components of the lesson plan were filled except for the teacher reflection post-lesson presentation. The lesson plans of participant #5 had assessment activities relating to the topic to be presented. He also prepared oral questions from the previous lesson presentation which sought to activate learners' prior knowledge before a new topic was presented. Learners were afforded expanded opportunities but the space in

the lesson plan for these was usually filled after the teacher diagnosed what kind of intervention was required for remediation.

#### **5.5.5.3 Assessment**

The school did not have a school assessment plan and the evidence of the assessment of the progressed learners was realised from the previous lesson plans. The forms of assessment given to the progressed learners were the re-assessment of informal activities like the classwork activities which were corrected with the whole class. The progressed learners were also given the transcription and spelling activities to familiarise themselves with words and to build their vocabulary. Feedback to these learners was prompt and efficient and the teacher gave constant encouragement. There was no other evidence kept in the teacher's file except for those activities written in the lesson plans.

#### **5.5.5.4 Teaching strategies**

Participant #5 used the method of group reading where he grouped learners according to their cognitive levels. In each group, he added a learner who led the group. Through this method, all learners were able to interact with their peers and everyone had a fair chance. Participant #5 designed phonics charts which he used to assist the progressed learners as the building blocks of words. Progressed learners were afforded a chance to be practically involved through touching, attempting to pronounce and to build their own three words per day.

#### **5.5.6 Participant #6**

##### **5.5.6.1 Policy documents**

Participant #6 was a male teacher teaching at a primary school A in the township. The researcher found that the teacher had a CAPS Policy Document for the teaching of E-FAL. The teacher portfolio also had the policies which guided the teacher with the promotion and progression of learners. The following documents regarding learner progression were

found in the teacher's file: NPA, NPPPR of the NCS. Participant #6 also had the School-Based Subject Policy which guided him how learners studying E-FAL were to be promoted or progressed to the next grade. Participant #6 did not have the School-Based Intervention Policy in his portfolio, but the learners had an intervention book in which remediation was done.

#### **5.5.6.2 Lesson plans**

The teacher used the correct E-FAL lesson plan template with all components as expected. The lesson plans for participant #6 did not entail the assessment activities for that cycle especially the informal assessment. The teacher only wrote hints of what learners should write about. Regarding the formal assessment task, the teacher just wrote "Formal assessment task no.1" Expanded opportunities were planned for in the lesson plan, but the activities for the expanded opportunities were determined by the challenges experienced during lesson presentation.

#### **5.5.6.3 Assessment**

Participant #6 did not have the school assessment plan in his teacher portfolio, but he had the programme of assessment activities for the formal tasks. At the same time, he did not have evidence of types of assessment activities given to the progressed learners, but he allocated learners some activity books in which he did remediation with the progressed learners. Remediation activities with the progressed learners were usually done outside the notional time of learning and teaching. Feedback was given to learners in a prompt and efficient manner and learners used the same feedback for re-assessment. The teacher filed moderated learners' mark sheets in his teacher portfolio and had the SA-SAMS printouts available.

#### **5.5.6.4 Teaching strategies**

The teacher did not use the teaching method that allowed learners to interact, however, he took the responsibility of reading paragraphs to the progressed learners every week which they transcribed on Fridays for recognition of letters and phonics. The teaching approach was both learner-centered and teacher-centered in that learners were expected to take responsibility, while on the hand he did not want to delegate his responsibility to peer tutoring and group work.

### **5.6 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the empirical findings gathered during interviews and observations. The researcher used the transcripts from the interviews to group his findings into themes which were then divided into categories. The empirical findings of this study produced five themes of which each had its own categories. The researcher also engaged in document analysis in which each document was analysed and this complemented the interview and observational findings. Five themes emerged from the document analysis and were also divided into categories. Chapter six outlines the relationship and links to the themes and categories.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SUMMARY, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 6 reflects on the summary of the theoretical framework and literature review completed in chapters 2 and 3 and a summary of the empirical study done in chapter 5. It presents a summary of how the themes and the categories in these chapters were interconnected and the relationships of the two were outlined in this chapter. It also presents the synthesis of findings and recommendations which the researcher deemed relevant in addressing the challenges experienced in teaching E-FAL to the progressed learners in the grade six classes around the Lichtenburg district. The last part of the chapter presents the concluding statement in summary of all the chapters mentioned above. Chapter 6 has also summarised the empirical findings of the qualitative inquiry which the researcher undertook to discover what teachers thought regarding teaching the progressed learners. The participating teachers were profiled according to their teaching experiences and qualifications. Data collected from the participants were grouped into themes where participants shared sentiments during the face to face interviews and the semi-structured interviews they had to respond to.

#### **6.2 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review of this study provided a description of the teachers' perspectives regarding teaching the progressed learners. The reason for the study was the increasing number of progressed learners in the Lichtenburg District especially regarding teaching E-FAL in the grade six classes. The progressed learners were defined as the learners who were moved from their previous to the next grade because of the progression policies mentioned below. They are called progressed learners because they did not pass their previous grades, but the policy dictated that their move to the next grade because of various

reasons among others included the age cohort, learners who were repeating the same grade for the second time or being in the phase for more than four years, all these determined the progression of the learners to the next grade.

Moreover, various factors contribute to the increase in progressed learner numbers; one of which is the lack of parental recognition and involvement SIAS, 2014. The inception of the progression policies like the NPPPR, 2011, NPA, 2011 and Regulation Gazette No. 9886. Vol.570 Gazette No. 36041 of December 2012 was to bring about improvement in the promotion and progression of the learners in the Department of Basic Education. These policies aroused interest in the researcher hence the research topic under study.

However, the problem of the increase in progressed learners is not only based in South Africa; hence the researcher made a comparison study between South Africa and Zimbabwe and the US in how underperforming learners (progressed learners) are catered for. In Zimbabwe, learners who were underperforming are called learners in the low stream. Mapolisa, 2014 classified two groups of learners in Zimbabwe as learners in the low stream: those who were underperforming and learners in the mainstream yielding good results. Most learners in the low stream in Zimbabwe benefitted by the introduction of the 'O' level Curriculum which has since progressed most learners from the Primary School Leaving Examination to Form One. The results of this progression of low learners had led to a drop in the quality of results of Form One learners in recent years Mafa and Tarusikirwa, 2013.

The researcher had also compared the progressed learners of South Africa to the underperforming learners of the US where these learners are called learners in a slow learner trap. Shaw, 2010 refers to these learners as students with borderline intellectual functioning. According to Shaw, 2010 these learners have low intelligence and academic performance but do not qualify for special education for either cognitive or learning disabilities.

Comparatively speaking the learners from the three backgrounds show similarities in underperformance promulgated by different factors. In South Africa factors such as lack of

parental recognition and involvement SIAS, 2014 and the inconsistency of the Post Provisioning Model Sephton, 2017 are important, while in Zimbabwe lack of basic infrastructure for teaching and learning, a problem of keeping and attracting specialists and qualified teachers in these schools, poor funding and limited resources Mandina, 2012 contribute the problem. The No Child Left Behind Act of the US brought in measures to reduce the increase of the learners in the slow learner track.

### **6.3 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL STUDY**

This study concerned teachers' perspectives regarding teaching the progressed learners in grade six who struggle to perform well as far E-FAL is concerned. The grade six classes were sampled in two primary schools as an exit grade to the senior phase which ultimately leads to secondary education. The researcher sampled six (n=6) participant teachers who were teaching E-FAL to the progressed learners, three (n=3) per school, from two (n=2) primary schools around the Lichtenburg District. Teachers were sampled with the teaching experience of seven years (n=7) and beyond and the composition of the participants were two (n=2) males and four (n=4) females. The researcher made no distinction based on gender, race, ethnic group or religion; all participants were voluntary.

The phenomenon under study explored the views of teachers regarding the teaching of E-FAL to the progressed learners in grade six. The aim of the study was to explore what teachers thought about teaching the progressed learners and their attitudes towards the progressed learners. The study further observed the attitudes of the progressed learners towards their schoolwork and day to day learning including their behaviour at large.

The summary of the empirical study was deduced from the interaction of the researcher with the participants as discussed in chapter 5. In this component, the researcher summarised the responses of the teachers who participated in this study during the interviews and their responses to the semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix B).

### **6.3.1 Summary and discussion of participants**

The researcher chose six participant teachers who were teaching E-FAL to the grade six progressed learners in the Lichtenburg District at the time at which this study was conducted. Participants were sampled from two (n=2) primary schools around the Lichtenburg District. From the six (n=6) participants, four (n=4) of them were female while two (n=2) were male teachers. The only criteria required were to have qualified teachers with a teaching experience of seven (7) years and above. All participants of this study were experienced teachers with a minimum of seven (7) years of teaching experience and the highest teaching experienced was participant #2 with a teaching experience of thirty-five (35) years. All the participants in this study were professionally qualified, and the researcher grouped them according to categories of their qualifications.

Participants #2 and #5 were holding the highest qualifications of Diploma in teaching, participant#4 had an Accredited Certificate in Education, Life Orientation Teaching, on another hand we had participant #6 with two higher qualifications, the Accredited Certificated in Education, in English Teaching and Higher Education Diploma in Education. The last two participants (#1 and #3) had the highest qualifications in the group and each with an Honours Degree in Management. All participants who took part in this study were teaching in primary schools, one in the township and another one in the village. They all taught more than one grade, one of which was grade six and they all taught E-FAL.

#### **Category 1.1. Summary and discussion of teacher profiling**

Some teachers were not properly qualified to teach the grade, six classes. Some teachers were qualified to teach at the secondary level and those who studied the primary teaching qualifications were not properly qualified to teach English. Most had improved their qualifications in other fields other than English. The researcher observed that the gap between the teachers and the curriculum policy (that they were supposed to implement) was gradually growing due to a lack of ongoing professional training. Some teachers did not take the initiative to improve their studies and proficiency in teaching the E-FAL. They

were dependent on the Professional Support Forums which the department held a few times each year.

### **6.3.2 Summary and discussion of teaching approaches**

Different teaching approaches were employed by the different participants of this study. Some believed in differentiated teaching and learning while others believed in using reading as an approach to teaching either through conceptual grouping, group guided reading or repetition.

When participant #1 was asked about the teaching approaches suitable for the progressed learners, she indicated that she preferred the differentiated teaching method in approaching the progressed learners. She said, *“Differentiated learning is the most effective method and approach that I normally use to teach the progressed learners because it allows me to interact with the majority of learners of different cognitive levels through different activities at the same time.”* Participant #1 supported her response by saying that when learners were approached with different teaching styles, it aroused their interest in the lesson and they all felt accommodated in the lesson.

Participant #3 concurred with participant #1 with her preference for the differentiated teaching approach. She said, *“The differentiated teaching has worked for me over the years although sometimes it has some elements of delay, I prefer it the most because it is the teaching approach in which all learners of different cognitive levels may be reached with correct application thereof.”* When asked to support her choice of the teaching approach, participant #3 also added, *“...with differentiated teaching learners are able to do different activities from the same context but all building towards the same goal.”* Both participant #1 and #3 concurred on the effectiveness of the differentiated teaching approach for different reasons. Levi, 2008 argues that learners do not learn the same way, so teachers cannot teach them all the same way and should adjust their teaching styles to reflect the learner's needs.

Participant #1 believed that this approach afforded her the chance to interact with learners of different cognitive levels; participant #3 felt that learners of all cognitive levels might be reached when this teaching approach is correctly applied. Both shared a common concern about addressing the cognitive levels of the learners.

Other teachers who were of a different view like participant #2 who preferred approaching the progressed learners with the repetition of concepts. In this way, learning content was consolidated and mastered. She said, *“I make time because I know that the repetition approach is always working for me most of the time than expected, I created time out of learners’ challenges and my schedule to repeat what was actually taught in class, and if they can sing a song about the learning content it makes me really happy because at the later stage I always make them aware what the song is all about.”*

She added, *“To me, facts repeated especially by the progressed learners, is content known because then I will not be far but to correct understanding and the correct spelling of how to write whatever is in the song. So, to me repetition, repetition, it works all the time.”* Participant #4 felt the best suitable approach to progressed learners was the conceptual grouping technique. Participant #4 argued that when learners were given concepts for the first time it was not simple for them to interact with the learning content well, but when these concepts were grouped and repeated, the learners became familiar with them and positive learning taking place. Professional Learning Board (PLB, 2019) concurs that repetition allows the skill to be practiced and rehearsed during teaching and learning.

Participant #5 believed in the learner-centered approach method coupled with the lecture method if correctly applied during teaching. She said, *“Although teaching progressed learners requires learner-centered approaches I believe in using the lecture method, because teachers are the major sources of information in the classroom and therefore for the lesson to be learner-centered, learners need to be equipped with information first, before seeking them to interact with you or the lesson.”*

Participant #5 believed that learners did not have enough information and that teachers should teach learners to equip them with the necessary content before learning could become learner-centered. He further added, *“When teaching learners, you must know that you teach them because there is a specific information or knowledge you want to acquaint them with and when you ask question in an informal or formal activity you are now withdrawing from what you have invested during teaching and learning, it is therefore important for learners to see teachers as sources of information and for teachers to apply themselves properly when teaching the progressed learners and other learners at large.”* Participant #5 emphasised that learning could not be learner-centered if the teachers were not first involved in teaching the new learning content to the progressed learners before learning could be consolidated.

Participant #6 argued, *“The best suitable teaching approach for the progressed learner according to him is teaching proficiency through reading and storytelling.”* He indicated that this method of teaching involved conveying events in words, images, and sounds which ultimately aroused learners’ interests to concentrate throughout the duration of the lesson. Participant #6 believed that progressed learners who were taught with the help of the teaching aids like pictures, images, and other resources were likely to improve more than those without these teaching and learning aids. Participant #6 emphasised that learners learned more effectively when they touched, demonstrated and acted what they were learning. He added, *“This is the type of teaching approach where your learners can remember something because they remember the classroom.”*

### **6.3.3 Summary and discussion of the challenges**

The researcher acknowledged that participants mentioned diverse challenges, but most were similar. The challenges of the participants were grouped according to the themes: overcrowding, shortage of resources and other external factors.

### 6.3.3.1 Over-crowding in classes

A challenge experienced by all the participants in this study was the overcrowded classes in which learners were packed including the progressed learners. The teachers lamented that they worked in classes that were disrupted by other learners because there was no space for the teacher movement in class.

Participant #4 said, *“There are plenty of challenges that I experience, and it saddens me as these challenges affect the progressed learners more than any other learner or teacher. Learners in my grade six class are congested, they are overcrowded and there is also a shortage of furniture for the learners in my grade six class.”*

At the same time, participant #3 shared her challenges with regard to the overcrowded classes of grade six, *“Our learners are overcrowded in class, currently I have one hundred and twenty-two learners in two classes that I teach, and moving in between the lines to attend those at the back is always difficult and most of the learners disrupting the class are those sitting at the back of which some are the progressed learners.”* The frustration of teachers regarding the overcrowded classes was raised by most of the participants. Participants also complained that some progressed learners in their classes were disruptive.

The shortage of adequate space in their schools led to overcrowding. This sentiment was shared by the majority of teachers in this research study. Participant #1 had over fifty learners in grade six classes. This made her life difficult especially as far as marking and controlling of learners' both formal and informal activities was concerned. IQMS performance standard number four required of her to assess learners and monitor their achievement progress while at the same time the learners' books were marked on time and feedback was timeously given to the learners. Furthermore, feedback should be insightful to the learners, but this required time to write comments and talk to the learners especially with so many learners in the class. The same statement was uttered by participant #6: *“Teaching learners overcrowded in a classroom is not such a big challenge compared to*



*marking and controlling their books, and we are allocated these number of learners to teach simply because even our management does not have a choice.”*

The participant #3 when asked about the challenges she had regarding teaching the progressed learners concurred with overcrowding shared by other participants and said, *“I have one hundred and twenty-two learners in two classes which I am supposed to teach English on daily basis and moving around their tables is very difficult and sometimes not possible at all.”* Participant #3 further indicated that at her school they only had fourteen classrooms which accommodated more than eight hundred learners, which require at least twenty classrooms. All these as indicated by the above-mentioned participants made accommodating the teaching of the progressed learners very difficult.

Teachers also lamented that classrooms that were overcrowded impeded them applying the necessary and relevant teaching methods and strategies especially as far as teaching progressed learners were concerned. Participant #6 said, *“One of the challenges coming with the overcrowded classrooms is that of lack of movement in between the learners’ tables which ultimately makes my classroom to be uncontrollable.”* Some teachers indicated that during teaching learners made a noise and threw things around while the teacher was focusing at a certain point in the classroom. Overcrowded classrooms linked to the shortage of infrastructure in schools was also a contributing factor to the increasing number of progressed grade six learners in the Lichtenburg District.

#### **6.3.3.2 Shortage of resources**

Teaching resources are essential for the success of the process of learning and teaching and lack thereof leads to the contrary. The researcher observed the shortage of reading resource materials in Lichtenburg schools and both schools under study did not have libraries. There was a shortage of teaching aids that could make the classrooms print-rich. Print-rich classrooms assist with the recognition of letters and phonics in both the presence and absence of the teacher. Due to the reasons presented above, reducing the number of the progressed learners in the District of Lichtenburg did not proceed as envisaged,

because the progressed learners lacked continuous interaction with learning materials which the schools did not have.

Zama, 2014 confirms that lack of resources in schools contribute to underperformance of learners when she argued that *“lack of resources like reading books for South African learners contributes a lot to the gap that creates this bigger challenge for the progressed learners to interact well with the E-FAL subject and other related subject taught in this language.”* Without teaching aids or other resources, it was challenging for teachers to teach successfully. There were no charts which were rich with phonics and phonemes to build the morphology of the progressed learner and their progress was very slow.

Another challenge raised by the participants was the shortage of school furniture in classes of grade six. Teachers had complained that they had learners who sit in three at tables for two, yet these learners were expected to write in a legible way and to be assessed in writing in both formal and informal activities. The congestion of learners at one table made assessment unfair.

When participant #1 was asked about which teaching resources she would like to have for the effective teaching of the progressed learners she said, *“Pictures make the teaching of English to all learners irrespective of whether they are progressed or not they all get interested in the lesson and get the meaning through demonstrative teaching.”* Pictures are important resources required for the teaching of the progressed learners.

In addition to what was said by participant #1, participant #3 shared the same sentiments when she said, *“We have teaching aids, but I just wish that we had those relevant to the teaching of the progressed learners because they are the ones that are suffering the most in terms of understanding and comprehending the learning content.”* In summary, teachers felt that adequate resources for the teaching of E-FAL would make a difference to the progressed learners.

### **6.3.3.3 Summary and discussion of the external factors**

#### **a) Lack of parental recognition and involvement**

The empirical study also found that most parents from the two schools were not well educated; some were illiterate. For this reason, the parents could not assist their children with homework and classwork. Some parents did not attend the meeting of remediation like the open days and results analysis meetings held at the end of the term. Some learners did not take responsibility for their studies, because they did not have support from home and were aware that even when they did not do their schoolwork, they were not monitored from home. Some learners were living in child-headed families where their siblings were playing different roles, as parents and children at the same time. Therefore, they could not manage to supervise the progressed learners in their families to do their work as they were busy with different chores which were home related and other school-related.

### **6.3.4 Summary and discussion of the teaching strategies**

The researcher observed different attitudes from teachers, especially regarding teaching the progressed learners. Most teachers felt that they had an obligation of covering the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) and therefore had to rush with lessons to be on par with the ATP. As participant #6 lamented, *“As things stand I am more concerned with what I am measured with. When specialists visit me, they want to see learners who can read and write hence my concentration is more on those two aspects of learning i.e. reading and writing, however, I also try my best to be inclusive of progressed learners.”* The attitudes of the teachers were best observed in how they planned their lessons. Where a teacher planned to address the deficiencies of the previous lessons, this determined his/her positive attitude and ensure that he/she moved with the entire classroom in terms of understanding the learning content.

However, some teachers did not plan the expanded opportunities for the learners who could not achieve the contents of the previous lesson. The participants also complained

that most progressed learners were always involved in the disrupted classes which they taught. Participant #3 complained about the behaviour of learners in overcrowded classes, *“Our learners are overcrowded in class, currently I have more learners than expected in two classes that I teach and moving in between the lines to attend those at the back is always difficult and most of the learners disrupting the class are those sitting at the back of which some are the progressed learners”*

Teachers also continuously mentioned parents who did not take part in the education of their children whereas at some point learners did not complete their task, simply because they did not understand or were left in the dark of what was expected of them. While at the same time some progressed learners did not attend the scheduled intervention and remediation activities. Participant #3 lamented about the progressed learners who did not attend scheduled remediation classes, *“I grouped my learners according to the similarity of their challenges and will assist them every day after school, however it is always a challenge because some of them do not honour this arrangement because I struggle to keep them together after school.”*

Teachers also complained about the lack of parental involvement in their children’s learning. They complained that most parents who did not attend the open days and other meetings called in relation to the learner performance were parents of the progressed learners. Another complaint raised was that despite the efforts made by the teachers to accommodate the progressed learners, most did not value the importance of attending these remediation sessions. Teachers complained that they had strategies for improvements, but there was a need for the learners to commit to the effort of improving their performance.

### **6.3.5 Summary and discussion of the assessment**

Through interacting with the teachers who participated in this research study, the researcher realized that the proficiency of most teachers teaching E-FAL to the progressed learners in this study was questionable. Some teachers could not speak English correctly

and during the interviews, some were not confident using this language. Most teachers relied heavily on the policy document rather than reading through other resource materials to enable themselves with the basics of teaching learners who were struggling. Learners' informal activity books were not marked in time; some books were not marked for the duration of over two months. Different teaching methods were not employed, and teachers resorted to the lecture method, which is a method more relevant to the learners of certain cognitive levels, not the progressed learners as they needed to be taken step by step. Informal assessment tasks were made standard; teachers did not vary the approach to the assessment of the learners as they indicated during the interviews. School-Based Assessment from informal to the formal was measured based on the understanding of the learners with the middle and the high cognitive levels.

The assessment was not used to train learners' comprehension and reading skills including all other skills assessed in language. There was a difference between how the informal assessment activities and how the formal assessment was set. Another deficiency observed by the researcher was that feedback to the learners was not given on time; by the time learners received their feedback, most learners had forgotten what was done on a particular day of writing those activities. The assessment given to learners was given without meaning or ensuring that it built towards the formal assessment.

Teachers did not allocate the progressed learners separate activity books which could have been used to interact with them during the time specifically created for remediation. Assessment of learners was the same for all learners as if all the learners in the class had the same cognitive level. Lesson plans of the subject did not cover certain components which could have made it easier for dealing with issues relating to the teaching of the progressed learners.

## **6.4 SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS**

This study gave the researcher perspective on what the teachers thought regarding the challenges experienced in the teaching of the progressed learners. The study also enlightened the researcher concerning the different teaching approaches that were suitable for the progressed learners. The measures of remediation and intervention presented by the other two countries were different from that of South Africa and more progressive. Through this study, the researcher learned that different teaching strategies should be employed during the teaching of the progressed learners. Differentiated teaching was one of the best approaches that were suitable for the teaching of the progressed learners. The researcher also acknowledged that different teachers should use different teaching methods and approaches for different learners in different settings.

The researcher also acknowledged the negative impact of the ATP which was monitored by superior officials on teaching and learning. The researcher noted that rushing towards covering the ATP did not help the progressed learners at all but rather affected them negatively as work which they did not grasp was piled on them. ATP also had assessment activities that were to be undertaken by all learners and they were all standardised regardless of the learners' cognitive levels. This ultimately rendered the progressed learners as continuous under-performers against the ATP.

The researcher learned that teachers should not prioritise the ATP and syllabus coverage over the development of learner understanding. Through this study, the researcher learned that learner performance should be tracked right from the beginning and proper measures of intervention should be applied. Effective and thorough planning for the progressed learners before going to class was essential.

The researcher had also learned that giving learners more informal assessment activities assisted and trained learners to learn to be independent. The success of teaching the progressed learners in grade six was impeded by these various factors above.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

From the empirical findings, the researcher came up with the following recommendations. First, the researcher recommended that schools should ensure that recruitment committees were established at schools to assist with teachers who were suitably qualified, to avoid having teachers who were not relevant to the grade or phase. Furthermore, teachers should be life-long learners to keep on par with the ever-changing curriculum. The researcher recommended that relevant learner-centered teaching strategies be employed to the teaching of the progressed learners at all times. On the issue of resources, schools should ensure that relevant resources be purchased. Classrooms should be supplied with letters of alphabets, phonics, phonemes, and pictures to promote incidental reading. Library materials should be bought and small library corners created, even if it was not in the classroom since classes were overcrowded.

Regarding the overcrowded classrooms, the researcher recommended that the department of Education North-West Province had to ensure that schools were allocated extra classrooms to create sufficient learning space to avoid overcrowding. It was also recommended that parents were called more often at school and the Quality Teaching-Learning Campaign Committee established at the level of the school. The researcher recommended that schools buy extra water storage tanks to reduce the early departure of the learners in the event that there was poor water supply from the municipality.

The researcher had also noted that progressed learners did not have the same learning patterns as the rest of other learners, and the researcher, therefore, recommended that the teaching styles be varied to accommodate all learning patterns of the learners. The assessment was also to be differentiated as a way of building towards the same context. Progressed learners should be given the repetition of activities to ensure that they understand the learning content offered. It is recommended that teachers should guide the progressed learners first before learning is centered on learners.

## **6.6 RESEARCH CONCLUSION**

Teachers' views regarding teaching the progressed learners in primary schools, grade six classes were explored in this study and the researcher observed that teachers were working in circumstances that were not favourable for teaching and learning especially for the progressed learners. Learners in this study were overcrowded in classes and there was a shortage of school furniture in classes, which made the teaching of the progressed learners more challenging. Some teachers were not qualified for the effective teaching of the progressed learners in primary schools since they had qualified for secondary school teaching. The challenge of the progressed learners is increasing in line with the increased enrolment of learners in schools around Lichtenburg District, including that of schools A and B which took part in this study. The increasing enrolment in these two schools meant that more learners were congested as no extra classrooms were supplied to these schools, hence the challenges of the teachers and the progressed learners had continued to grow.

This study also identified another challenge regarding teaching the progressed learners as that of lack parental recognition SIAS, 2014 and involvement in the learners' work. According to SIAS, when parents show interest in the learning of their children, the children tend to reward the recognition offered by parents by trying their best. The researcher also observed the teachers were given workloads that were not balanced. In the opinion of the researcher, a teacher who worked with the progressed learners was not supposed to be given two languages to teach especially in two or more different grades. The weighting of languages confirms that they involve more responsibility than those of other subjects. With the latter statement, the researcher concurred with what Sephton, 2017 raised in the Post Provisioning Model when she referred to the recruitment of teachers and imbalanced allocation of teachers in schools.

The researcher also acknowledged a need to work first on the behaviour of the learners before the actual teaching and learning could take place. The parents and the teachers need to work mutually to ensure that learners are afforded a fair chance, irrespective of cognitive abilities. Zhou and Brown, 2015 indicate that interactive theory highlights the



relationship between cognitive development and learner-centeredness and a co-constructivist basis of learning, in which the learner's potential within the social context is accommodated.

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## APPENDICES



### APPENDIX A: Semi-Structured Interview

**Title: “Exploring grade six teachers’ views regarding teaching progressed learners’ in Lichtenburg selected primary schools in South Africa.”**

#### **Dear Prospective Participant**

My name is Daniel Keoagile Moagi and I am doing research with Dr. A.S Mawela, a lecturer in the Department of Curriculum Studies towards a *Master of Education Degree (MEd)* in Curriculum and Instructional Studies at the University of South Africa. For the purpose of recording, a pseudonym will be given to the names of schools and the teachers.

#### **A. Participant Biography**

1. What is your highest teaching qualification?

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2. Which grade, and subject do you teach at school?

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3. What is your teaching experience?

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## **B. Teaching Approaches**

1. Which teaching approaches do you think are suitable for teaching the progressed learners in EFAL?

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2. Give reasons why the above teaching approaches are suitable in teaching EFAL progressed learners in grade six?

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3. What do you understand by Process approach teaching method?

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### **C. Theories**

1. Which theories underpin the teaching and learning of progressed learners?

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2. What are the benefits of using the theory indicated above?

### **D. Challenges**

1. Do you have any challenges regarding teaching progressed learners in grade six?  
Please indicate them.

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2. Do you have enough resources to teach EFAL progressed learners in grade six?

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3. Indicate some of the resources you intend to have for effective teaching of EFAL progressed learners in grade six?

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4. State some of the external factors that impede the success of teaching the EFAL progressed learners in grade six?

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### **E. Teaching Strategies**

1. Do you have any teaching strategies in place to enhance the teaching and learning of EFAL progressed learners in grade six?

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2. How would you apply the “think, pair, share strategy” of teaching in lesson in grade six?

### **F. Assessment**

1. How would you define the term assessment?

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2. When designing assessment activities, how do you cater for EFAL progressed learners in grade six?

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3. What are the common challenges regarding assessing EFAL progressed learners in grade six?

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4. How do you give feedback of the assessment to EFAL progressed learners in grade six?

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5. Are there any other strategies that you employ to enhance EFAL progressed learners' performance in grade six? If yes, please, indicate them.

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## APPENDIX-B: Classroom Observation Schedule

**Title: Exploring teachers' views regarding teaching progressed learners in Lichtenburg selected primary schools**

### DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT:

I am Daniel Keoagile Moagi am doing research under the supervision of Dr. A.S. Mawela a lecturer in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies towards a Master of Education (MEd) at the University of South Africa and would like to know if you have read and signed the consent form as a participant of this research study. Please indicate by saying yes or No before we can proceed with the observation. There are five (n=5) main items to be observed, namely: Teaching Approaches, Theories foregrounding the teaching of progressed learners, Challenges, Teaching Strategies, and Assessment. For the purpose of recording, a pseudonym will be given to the names of schools and teachers.

Aspect	Observation Remarks
<b>1. Teaching Approach</b> 1.1. Which teaching approach does the teacher use to teach learners? 1.2. Does the teaching approach address all learners from different cognitive levels? 1.3. Does the teacher accommodate progressed learners during teaching?	

<p><b>2. Theories</b></p> <p>2.1. Which theory is much used during the lesson presentation?</p> <p>2.2. Does the teacher use the learner-centered approach or the lecture method?</p> <p>2.3. How is learner involvement implemented to the benefit of the progressed learners?</p>	
<p><b>3. Challenges</b></p> <p>3.1. Does the teacher have adequate resources to teach progressed learners?</p> <p>3.2. Is the learning space favourable and conducive for the teaching of the progressed learners?</p>	
<p><b>4. Teaching Strategies</b></p> <p>4.1 Are learners paired with the intention to assist progressed learners?</p> <p>4.2 Which among these strategies is best used by the teacher, scaffolding, think pair, share reciprocal teaching or information recalling method?</p>	

<p><b>5     Assessment</b></p> <p>5.1 Does the teacher have an assessment plan?</p> <p>5.2 Which types of assessments do teachers use to assess the progressed learners during teaching?</p> <p>5.3 What are the forms of assessments is given to progressed learners?</p> <p>5.4 Is feedback to learners prompt, efficient and insightful?</p> <p>5.5 Is there evidence of learner assessment records in teacher portfolio?</p> <p>5.6 How is assessment given to the learners, is it given per individual, pairing or group?</p> <p>5.7 Does learner assessment show signs of differentiated learning style?</p>	
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## APPENDIX C: Document Analysis Instrument

**Title: Exploring grade six teachers' views regarding teaching progressed learners' in Lichtenberg selected primary schools in South Africa.**

### Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Daniel Keoagile Moagi and I am doing research with Dr. A.S Mawela, a lecturer in the Department of Curriculum Studies towards a *Master of Education Degree* in Curriculum and Instructional Studies at the University of South Africa. Please indicate by saying yes or No before we can proceed with the document analysis. There are four main documents that will be requested from you, namely: Policy documents, subject lesson plans, and assessment plans and activities. For the purpose of recording, a pseudonym will be given to the names of schools and teachers.

Items	Findings
<b>1. Policy Documents</b>	
1.1. Do teachers have the relevant CAPS Policy documents to teach E-FAL (E-FAL)?	
1.2. Do teachers have the following policies:	a)



<p>a) National Protocol on Assessment, Government Gazette 36041 (2012), and</p> <p>b) National policy pertaining to Promotion and Progression Requirements Grade R-12?</p> <p>c) Does the school have the school-based subject policy?</p> <p>d) Does the school have the school-based teaching and learning intervention policy?</p>	b)
	c)
	d)
<p><b>2. Lesson Plans</b></p> <p>2.1. Does the teacher have the correct E-FAL lesson plans?</p> <p>2.2. Does each lesson plan have assessment activities?</p> <p>2.3. Does the lesson plan afford the progressed learners expanded opportunities?</p>	
<p><b>3. Assessment</b></p> <p>3.1. Does the school have an assessment plan?</p>	

3.2. Evidence of types of assessment given to progress learners during teaching and learning?	
3.3. Evidence of forms of assessments given to progressed learners?	
3.4. Evidence of feedback given to progressed learners	
3.5. Is there evidence of progressed learner assessment records in teachers' files?	
<b>4. Teaching Strategies</b>	
4.1. Does the teacher use the teaching method which enables learners to interact with their peers?	
4.2. Is the lesson presentation learner-centered or teacher-centered?	
4.3. How do teachers apply the school-based intervention policy to enhance the teaching of progressed learners?	

## APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2018/09/12

Dear Mr Moagi

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2018/09/12 to 2021/09/12

Ref: 2018/09/12/43533515/06/MC

Name: Mr DK Moagi

Student: 43533515

**Researcher(s):** Name: Mr DK Moagi  
E-mail address: 43533515@mylife.unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +27 82 551 9762

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Dr AS Mawela  
E-mail address: mawela.as@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +27 12 429 4381

#### Title of research:

**Exploring Grade six teachers' views regarding teaching progressed learners in Lichtenburg selected primary schools.**

**Qualification:** M. Ed In Curriculum and Instructional Studies

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2018/09/12 to 2021/09/12.

*The low risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2018/09/12 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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## APPENDIX E: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



### Education and Sport Development

Department of Education and Sport Development  
Departement van Onderwys en Sportontwikkeling  
Lefapha la Thuto le Tlhabololo ya Matshameko  
**NORTH WEST PROVINCE**

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Mmabatho 2726  
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Fax.: 085-514-0125  
e-mail: mothabane@nwag.gov.za

### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL

Enq. : Dr TA Phorabatho  
Tel. : 018 368 3429/3433/3071

To: Dr AS Mawela  
University of South Africa  
Faculty of Education

From: Mrs S M Semaswe  
Superintendent-General

Date : 13 November 2016

#### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MR DK MOAGI

Permission is hereby granted to Mr. DK Moagi to conduct research in the department as requested, subject to the following conditions:

- He contacts the relevant School Principals for his target schools about his request with this letter of permission.
- Considering that your research will involve both Educators and Learners, the general functionality of the school should not be compromised by the research process.
- The participation in your project will be voluntary.
- The principles of informed consent and confidentiality will be observed in strictest terms, and
- The findings of your research should be made available to the North West Department of Education and Sport Development upon request.

Best wishes

Mrs S M Semaswe  
Superintendent-General



"Towards Excellence in Education and Sport Development"